THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF

WWII SEA MINES IN THE GULF OF FINLAND

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CONTENTS

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1 INTRODUCTION

During WWII, 60,000 sea mines were laid to the Gulf of Finland. Mine warfare resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and the losses of tens of ships in the region. After the war, a large-scale demining had to begin, and it was a dangerous endeavour in which many minesweepers lost their lives. Even today there are tens of thousands of sea mines on the bottom of the sea, and demining in the Gulf of Finland continues to this day. The mines are still dangerous, a heritage of a war that took place on these waters more than 70 years ago.

The mines are still present in the waters of the Gulf of Finland, and the occasional media coverage of found and destroyed mines keep them afloat in the cultural memory of the region. This heritage, the material remains of thousands of sea mines in the bottom of the sea, and in museum exhibitions and incorporated into memorial constructions, and the ways of remembering the history attached to these objects, are the focus of this study.

As most of the mines still dot the bottom of the sea, remembering of mine warfare and post-war demining have materialized in an increasing volume in the last decades in the region. Memorials, commemorating both the victims of mine warfare and the contributions of minesweepers in clearing the waters after the war, as well as museum exhibitions of the dangerous objects themselves, are some of the ways in which the heritage of mine war and its consequences has been promoted in both sides of the Gulf of Finland.

1.1 Study objectives

The aim of the research is to understand the heritage and cultural memory related to the mine war and post-war demining in the region. Uncovering and explaining the different narratives and their even conflicting versions of the past attached to the mines in the modern states of the Gulf of Finland, i.e. Finland, Russia and Estonia, are one of the aims of this study. For the purpose of answering the posed questions, the study consists of different perspectives in separate chapters focusing on different phenomena related to the overarching research question in both Finland and Estonia, covering both memorials and museums. A short summary of these perspectives is provided below; the title in italics refer to their titles as found in this work.

The first perspective *(Minesweeper memorials in Finland)* examines the memorial structures and sites in Finland that commemorate the contributions and sacrifices of minesweepers

who cleared around 10,000 mines from the Gulf of Finland in the post-war years. The study examines the visuality, textuality, location and use of the memorials in an attempt to understand the monuments, their appearance and setting, the cultural memory and the historical narrative they mediate, and the political and social currents behind their construction.

The second perspective (*Sea mine exhibitions*) is a comparative study of two sea mine exhibitions, the Mine Museum in Pansio, Turku, and the mine exhibition in the Seaplane Harbour of the Estonian Maritime Museum in Tallinn. The study compares the accessibility, visitor experience, space, visuality and textuality of the exhibitions, and seeks to understand the different ways of interpreting and exhibiting the mines and their history in the two museums located on both sides of the Gulf of Finland.

The third perspective (*Juminda memorials: contested past in Estonia*) examines the changing and conflicting meanings of the memorials commemorating the battle of Juminda in Estonia. The battle of Juminda was one of the biggest naval battles in history, yet it remains fairly unknown; the battle was characterised by the massive use of sea mines as an offensive weapon, and the losses due to mines in the battle were devastating. After being officially forgotten for a long time, the memory of the battle evokes conflicting memories in the Estonian and Russian communities today, and the site has been subject to changing interpretations, negligence and vandalism, making it a case of ”difficult heritage” related to the memories of mine warfare in the region. The study attempts to analyse the memorial sites and the conflicting memories of the battle as difficult heritage, and to understand the political reality surrounding the political use of the site in post-Soviet Estonia.

Commemoration of the mine war and post-war demining has increased rapidly in the past decades, but the memories mediated by the memorials and museums promoting the memory of the past of the mines have not yet been analysed scientifically (actually, there are no previous works on the cultural heritage of sea mines, or other explosives left by the wars of the recent past in the landscape globally).[1] As mentioned above, the memories of mine war can sometimes be classified within the frameworks of ”difficult heritage”, making it important to understand memories of the past that evoke controversy even today. This study attempts to deepen our understanding of the

[1] The most common type of dangerous explosives left by past conflicts in the landscape are probably land mines; they are still a real problem in modern war-torn societies like Afghanistan, or in Egypt, which has the highest number of land mines left in the landscape by past conflicts in the world (Andersson et al. 1995; Megahed et al. 2010).

remembering and heritage of the mines, which still appear occasionally in news headlines as the modern societies of the region pursue to get rid of this dangerous heritage of war.[2]

The study has been confined to the three perspectives outlined above for scientific and practical reasons. The perspectives attempt to uncover representative samples, exploring different media of commemorating and exhibiting the past, in this case memorials and museums. Memorials and museums have been chosen as the focus of this study for their materiality, for their role as public monuments and institutions projecting interpretations of the past in a top-down direction, enabling one to make a picture of the ”official” version of history they mediate to the public, and for the amount of existing scientific literature on the study of these media. They are also easy to visit and examine *in situ*.

The heritage of WWII sea mines is, of course, a topic that is relevant to the whole Baltic Sea region; the study has been confined to the Gulf of Finland, however, as the highest density of sea mines in the Baltic due to WWII is to be found in the Gulf of Finland. The focus on this region also makes the study a more comprehensible whole, as it already has to leave relevant material related to the study topic in the specified region from consideration; a geographically wider study relating to the whole Baltic region would also possibly make the study more fragmented.

1.2 Research history

Examination of memorial structures and their connection to cultural memory form a substantial part of the study. Memorials and cultural memory have been studied increasingly in the past few decades, the study field being characteristically interdisciplinary, using various theoretical frameworks from across disciplines, including geography, architecture and art history. The role of archaeologists in studying memorials and cultural memory has also been increasing, due to the discipline’s interest in cultural heritage, itself a field concerned with cultural memory.

Memorials are places of memory, Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire,*[3] a phenomenon connected to modernity, and closely related to nationalism.[4] As public monuments they usually

[2] See, for example, the following news articles on WWII sea mines found and/or destroyed in the Gulf of Finland and Baltic waters in recent years: LSM.LV 1.9.2017; *The Washington Post* 26.10.2018.
[3] Nora 1989.
[4] A good introduction to memorial studies is Kidd & Murdoch 2004. See also Mayo 1988, Mitchell 2003 and Niven 2007 for the social and political meaning of war memorials. Foote and Azaryahu’s work is also useful in understanding the connection between memory and space in memorials (Foote & Azaryahu 2007). See also Whitmarsh 2001 for war commemoration in memorials and museums, Kattago 2009 for a discussion of the modern origins of memorials, and Inglis 1992:15-18 for a discussion of war memorials as a ”civil religion”. For memorial landscapes, see Dwyer & Alderman 2008.

portray events or personages important to the existing political order at a given moment, expressing the values and an idealised vision of the past of that temporary political entity.[5] This is why memorials are active agents in the construction of cultural memory, a political tool of shaping conceptions of history, and so, national identity.[6] Memorials have also their commemorative dimension, creating the possibility of the existence of other, less politicized memorials commemorating civilian tragedy. Memorials freeze a moment in history in an attempt to symbolically make it timeless; they sacralise a past event, and memorial sites usually also work as ritual places and places of pilgrimage.[7]

War is one of the most common subjects of commemoration in memorials.[8] As noted by Davies, ”war memorials are probably the most widespread of European public statuary”.[9] Commemoration of war in memorials is typically official, projecting a nationalist sacralization to the ones who fought for the political entity;[10] the veterans and the deceased soldiers are portrayed as heroes who fought for the nation state, omitting political and ideological divisions, and the diverse feelings about war, of the soldiers who actually fought in the war.[11] Representations of pain and dismembered bodies are also omitted in conventional war memorials.[12] The political reasons why wars are fought are also hidden behind nationalist drumbeating of martyrdom and sacrifice. War memorials, thus, offer an idealized memory of war.

As described above, one of the perspectives of this study considers what is called ”difficult heritage” or ”dark heritage” in heritage studies. The study of difficult heritage is a rather new, albeit expanding, focus of heritage studies, and is usually concerned with the study of memorial

[5] For this reason, the change of regimes in a state creates a multi-layered, contradictory memorial landscape. See, for example, Leach’s study of the memorial landscape of East Timor, which consists of memorials from the successive rules of the colonial Portuguese, the neo-colonial Indonesians and now, of the independent state of East Timor, each layer of monuments conveying a different version of history, and thus, identity (Leach 2009). The meanings of memorial sites from previous regimes might also change as time passes (Forest & Johnson 2002); memorials of previous regimes might also be torn down in an act of iconoclasm (Inglis 1992:19-21).
[6] Ben-Amos 2003; Gordon & Osborne 2004; Stephens 2007; Doss 2008; Burch & Smith 2007; Smith 2008; Kattago 2009; Szpunar 2010; Forest & Johnson 2002.
[7] Pilgrimages can, of course, be of those who honour the ones commemorated in the memorials, or of the ones being commemorated in the memorials. Pilgrimages of former veterans to memorials commemorating the war they took part in can affect the veterans in different ways. In studies of the Vietnam War veterans’ use of the memorial sites commemorating the Vietnam War, veterans’ reactions range from the sites working as pilgrimage destinations and places of healing (Dubisch 2008; Watkins et al. 2010; Beckstead et al. 2011) to potential suicide sites (Haines 2009).
[8] Beckstead et al. 2011; Inglis 1992; Davies 1992.
[9] Davies 1992.
[10] Representations of common soldiers in memorials in order to commemorate everyone who fought in a war, instead of person cults of elite officers and leaders, can be linked to modernisation and the birth of the nation-state, and especially to the ”democratization of death” ushered in by the First World War, where the capacity of industrialized societies to kill millions was demonstrated (Stephens 2007:245-246; Mosse 1990; Kattago 2009; Inglis 1992:7-8; Niven 2007).
[11] In 2000, American WWII veterans protested against the National World War II Memorial in Washington DC, in part for being ”disheartened with its deceitful glorification of the war and their own participation” (Doss 2008:243).
[12] ”Sculptors everywhere avoid realistic horror when they depict dead and wounded men” (Inglis 1992:8). See also Ypersele 2004.

sites related to difficult history.[13] The connection of difficult heritage to the former is especially clear, as sites of difficult heritage are usually also sites of dark tourism, a related field in geography attempting to understand, in most cases, the tourism of places with uneasy and unsettling history (i.e. sites of difficult heritage).[14] The archaeological interest in studying difficult heritage is also rising, however, connected to the wider interest in heritage and cultural memory in the archaeological community.[15]

Another media of representing history discussed in this study are museums. Museums are institutions with the official role as educational places shaping popular perceptions of history.[16] The perceptions of history mediated by museums aren't, however, purely objective. The choices of what objects to display, how to arrange and exhibit them, and what kinds of interpretations of them and their connections to the past to offer to visitors in interpretative text plaques, and in the other hand, what to exclude and why, are all decisions made in the museum institution. Museum exhibitions, therefore, express different, sometimes even controversial, biases of the institution interpreting history.[17]

The study of commemoration in memorials and museums falls under the umbrella of the studies of cultural or collective memory.[18] Cultural memory is the collection of collective knowledge of past events, as inherited in the form of oral history and recollections from those who actually witnessed the past, and as learned from those interpreting that past in the later generations. Cultural memory can be institutional and official, as the versions of history (national narratives) usually displayed in memorials and museums; the myths once created in top-down histories can also, by time, be absorbed into mainstream cultural memory. Non-official cultural memory can also represent counternarratives, which offer a dramatically different version of history than official history; they may also intentionally seek to undermine the official version of history.[19] What is common to cultural memory is that it is not scientific, objective history; facts might not be right, and myths might be widely accepted.[20] Other phenomena of the historical reality are intentionally kept

[13] For a good introduction to difficult heritage, see Logan & Reeves 2009.
[14] See, for example, Stone 2006; Stone 2013.
[15] See, for example, Thomas et al. 2016; Banks et al. 2017.
[16] Hooper-Greenhill 1999.
[17] Dubin 1999; Jeans 2005; Bothwell et al. 2008; Whitmarsh 2001.
[18] See Bar-Tal 2014; the contributions in Kidd & Murdoch 2004 examine different media of collective memory related to war commemoration.
[19] Counternarratives are usually the narratives of history of disenfranchised or minority groups of people (like indigenous or colonized peoples), or those of the lost side in a society that has experienced a civil war; what is evident about historical narratives, of course, is that they are connected to politics and power relations. See Mitchell 2003.
[20] For an archaeological example, Reid's *Myths and Realities of Caribbean History* (Reid 2009) is a good work, where the author seeks to discard some popular misconceptions about the history of the Caribbean. For the relationship between collective memory and professional history, see: Winter & Sivan 1999:8.

alive in collective memory and commemorated, while others (usually the difficult history that creates difficult heritage) are actively forgotten and left unmentioned.

More specifically, the study examines the heritage and commemoration of war.[21] Conflicts of the recent past[22] usually leave emotionally charged memories in a community, and the narratives of past conflicts can form important building blocks in the construction of national identities of today. The horrors of war and the sorrow for those who died, were wounded or otherwise experienced the war, need to be processed in a post-war society; war also works as a fodder for feeding the political use of war.[23] The remembering of war, thus, takes many forms, of which memorials and museum exhibitions are just a few; recollections, documentaries, representations of war in popular culture, and tourism to battle sites,[24] are all ways in which a past conflict is both processed and used for different purposes in the contemporary society.

A conflict of the recent past in the area of the Gulf of Finland is, of course, the Second World War (even as there is more than 70 years from the war, its memory lives strong in the region, as it does elsewhere in the world). The commemoration of WWII in the modern Western world and the Russian Federation is a part of the living culture of the day; the phenomenon seems not to be fading as the generations who actually experienced the time are passing by; in the contrary, it seems to be gaining momentum in the 21st century, as the war is increasingly present in different media like books, documentaries, movies and video games,[25] not to forget the still alive and well culture of the official commemoration of war in the form of battle anniversaries and the honouring of WWII veterans in many Western countries as well as in Russia.

So why is WWII still such a hot topic? It can be argued that the heritage of WWII has become the part of many national identities in the modern world. It has political usage, as mentioned above, and it can provide a sense of community in post-war generations, as the shared hardships of the past are seen to connect the modern nations that have inherited the common past of their forebears. National identity, as used in politics as well as experienced personally, is a key factor here: in Russia, where the war is called the Great Patriotic War, the victory over the Nazis provides the base for the

[21] Winter & Sivan 1999; Mosse 1990; Evans & Lunn 1997.
[22] Recent past refers here to the past that we still have an emotional connection to, meaning the past has been either contemporary with us, or is known and empathized in a community through oral history of generations who witnessed the era.
[23] Wood 2011 discusses the political dimensions of WWII commemoration in Russia; see also Doss 2008 for a discussion of the criticism posed to National World War II Memorial in Washington DC for its political dimension in its glorification of American militarism during the Iraq War.
[24] Dunkley et al. 2010; Miles 2013.
[25] See, for example, Paris 2007.

narrative of heroism in a battle against an evil regime.[26] In Finland, the relatively successful battle against the overwhelming Soviet Union in the Winter War serves the narratives of a common will to defend the homeland, a story of the hardships and bravery of a small nation in the battle against an evil aggressor.[27] In Germany, commemorating the Nazi past is officially a taboo; yet in the political atmosphere of today's Europe, the Nazi nostalgia of far-right groups is not unknown either. These are all narratives that serve modern politics and the nationalist construction of identity. True history, of course, is far more complicated than the overly simplified narratives that so often form the basis of a shared conception of history.

[26] See, for example, the following studies on the Soviet and post-Soviet cultural memory of WWII in Russia (and among the Russian minorities in post-Soviet countries): Youngblood 2001; Tumarkin 2003; Wood 2011; Smith 2008; Kattago 2009.
[27] Jokisipilä 2005; Meinander 2015.

2 BACKGROUND

The cultural heritage of sea mines in the form of material remains from the past consists of the mines themselves, whether in the bottom of the sea or exhibited in museums or incorporated into memorial structures, and the vessels that connect to the history of the mines (e.g. minelaying and minesweeper vessels, ships sunken by mines). As the mines form the central assemblage of the phenomenon at hand, the following text will focus on them especially: what sea mines are, how they were used during WWII in the Gulf of Finland, and how they have been destroyed since in the region.

2.1 Sea mines: typology and operation[28]

Sea mines used during WWII can be typologized in different groups according to their placement and mode of operation. Further they can be grouped by their manufacturing countries, or when even more detailed information is pursued, by their specific models (for example, the Finnish contact mine S/43), as sea mines used during the war improved technologically through the course of the war. Such detailed descriptions are not pursued here, and only basic technological traits of the sea mines are discussed.

The most widely used mode of placement was that used in moored mines, where the mines are connected to an anchor by a long chain, the anchor cable. The mine floats in a chosen distance from the surface due to the chosen anchor cable length. The anchor lies at the bottom of the sea, making the placement mode ideal for the Gulf of Finland, as the average water depth in the region is only 38 m. In this way, the mines can be laid at, for example, 2 m from the surface, when they can't be seen from the surface but when they will detonate when hitting the bottom of a vessel (in the case of contact mines). Using moored mines, sea mines can also be used against submarines, when they are put to float in lower water depths.

The contact mine was a typical sea mine type used in the Gulf of Finland during WWII. Typical contact mines had Hertz horns on their mine casings, and exploded when a horn was broken by contact with a ship. Other contact mines had just to be touched by something metallic to detonate – even touching the anchor cable was enough.

[28] Information in the chapter is combined from the following works: Auvinen 2005; Grooss 2017:66-68; the single best volume for sea mine typology is Auvinen 2002; *Miinapalvelusohje 31: miinojen vaarattomaksiteko* (1943) is also a good typological guide to mines of the era.

Magnetic and acoustic mines differ from contact mines in that they do not require physical contact with a ship to detonate. Magnetic mines detonated, when a big enough change in the surrounding magnetic fields occurred, for example, by the passage of a boat. Magnetic mines were laid in the bottom instead of floating in the end of anchor cables. Acoustic mines reacted to the sounds of motors. Magnetic and acoustic mines were also extensively used in the Gulf of Finland.

Sea mines were designed to sink even big ships, and they held enough explosive material to achieve this end. During WWII they proved to be useful in this matter, sinking numerous ships of different size classes. In many instances, mines alone did not produce casualties, but they disabled ships so that they could more easily be hit by artillery or aircraft. Sea mines were laid in minefields that usually consisted of a few thousand mines. To avoid blowing up a whole minefield due to the explosion of only one mine, the mines were usually laid at least 100 m from each other. Maritime minefields were usually laid by minelayer vessels, a specific vessel type of WWII navies designed for this purpose. Submarines could also lay mines unnoticed, and they could also be dropped from airplanes. Monitoring minefields was an important part of sea mine warfare, as enemy forces might otherwise clear the minefields. Minesweeping was made harder also by minesweeping obstacles (for example explosive buoys).

There's a special issue on sea mine warfare relating to the natural environment of the Gulf of Finland worthy of note here. Naval warfare in the area ceased in winter due to ice cover over the area, but ice sheets also destroyed sea mines, which meant that the mine situation was different each spring from what it had been in the preceding autumn.

2.2 Sea mine warfare during WWII[29]

Maritime warfare in the Gulf of Finland during WWII can be divided into following phases. The first conflict in the area was the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1939-1940. It was followed by a brief peaceful time, during which Estonia was occupied by the Soviets in 1940-1941 without a war. In 1941 war broke out between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, with Finland joining the war against the Soviets a few days after the Germans (this war is called the Continuation War in Finland). Estonia was occupied by the Germans in 1941, and Soviet Union was able to take Estonia back only in 1944. In the same year Finland signed a peace treaty with the Soviet Union and fought

[29] Information in the chapter is combined from the following works: Auvinen 2005; Grooss 2017; Wihtol 1987.

off the former allies, the Germans, from the country. The German retreat from the Gulf of Finland ended maritime warfare in the area.

All these shifting situations during WWII in the area resulted in over 60,000 sea mines being laid by Finnish, German and Soviet forces in the Gulf of Finland. The distribution of minefields in the area echoed practical geopolitical realities, as most of the minefields were laid by Germans and Finns, in a north-southerly direction in different parts of the Gulf of Finland during the war, so that the Soviet Baltic Fleet would be trapped in the eastern end of the gulf, making the Soviet maritime forces unable to get to other parts of the Baltic Sea to threaten, for example, German-controlled coastal areas and German shipping, or from the Finnish perspective, to ensure the country's maritime trade from southwestern coastal cities like Turku, as these were outside the heavily mined waters of the Gulf of Finland.

Two of the most important geopolitical lines considered in the mine use of Germans and Finns was the Porkkala-Naissaar passage, a narrow, less than 50 km wide passage from the Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Finland, and the north-south axis crossing Suursaari, a big island in a tactically important location in the eastern Gulf of Finland. Sea mines proved effective in this task of keeping the Soviets from the Baltic, so that the Soviet Baltic Fleet could not operate elsewhere in the Baltic Sea until 1944.

The most dramatic event in WWII sea mine warfare was the battle of Juminda in 28 August 1941,[30] in which Finns and Germans laid series of minefields, containing 2800 mines and 1500 explosive buoys, between the Finnish and Estonian coasts, east of Tallinn, to prevent the evacuation of Soviet forces and civilians from Tallinn to Kronstadt, as the city was coming under German attack from the west. The Soviet convoy forced its way through the minefield while fighting the Germans at the same time. Estimates of the number of people who died in the Soviet side run between 10,000 and 25,000 human lives, and 65 ships were sunk.

The evacuation of Hanko in 3 December 1941 was also hampered by sea mines. As Soviet forces withdrew from their base in Hanko by sea, they lost several vessels due to hitting sea mines. The biggest loss was that of the passenger ship *Josef Stalin*, that hit four sea mines in a row, in addition being shelled by coastal artillery. About 3000 crew members perished.[31]

[30] Also known as the mine battle of Tallinn, the Soviet Dunkerque, and the Soviet evacuation of Tallinn. For literature on the Juminda battle, see: Õun 2006 (in Estonian; figure informations and a summary are provided in English). Juminda is briefly covered also in Auvinen 2005:494-496; Wihtol 1987:137-145; Grooss 2017:148-151.
[31] For information on the evacuation of Hanko, see: Grooss 2017:153-155; Auvinen 2005:496.

A small event compared to the above-mentioned battles, but a considerable national tragedy in Finland, was the sinking of a Finnish flagship, the coastal defence ship *Ilmarinen*, after hitting a sea mine. This happened in 13 September 1941 close to Utö, the southernmost inhabited island of Finland, taking the lives of 271 men. The wreck was found in 1990 in about 80 m depth.[32]

Sea mines were the *de facto* main weapon of the Finnish Navy, as they caused most of the Soviet casualties of maritime warfare in the region; the weapon functioned as a major factor in German and Finnish losses as well. Of the about 104 military vessels that the Soviet side lost during the Continuation War in the region, about 60 % were lost due to hitting mines; Germans lost about 46 vessels, of which about 41 % due to mines; Finns lost 18 vessels, of which about 28 % due to mines.[33]

2.3 Post-war demining[34]

After Finland lost the Continuation War against the Soviet Union in September 1944, the Soviets ordered Finland, as one of the requirements of the peace treaty, to create a minesweeper unit to clear the Gulf of Finland,[35] including Soviet-controlled waters, from sea mines laid by all parties. At the time, the Gulf of Finland was the most densely mined body of water in the world. The minesweeper unit consisted of about 2000 men and 200 vessels. In 1950, active demining ended.[36] During the post-war demining period of 1944-1950, 28 minesweepers lost their lives and 35 were wounded, and 7 vessels were destroyed and 9 damaged. About 10,000 sea mines and mine-clearing obstacles were destroyed by Finnish minesweepers, most of these in the Gulf of Finland. Soviet minesweepers also destroyed mines in the Gulf of Finland in the post-war years, but most of the activity was carried out by Finnish units.

Demining was a cooperative task undertaken in units consisting of several minesweeper vessels. The vessels dragged underwater cable cutting equipment behind them, so that the mine casings would rise on the surface behind the ships. The cable and kite system of the demining equipment made it possible for the vessel itself not to move over the mines. The surfaced mines would then have been shot from the ships with a 20 mm autocannon, in order to hit them so that they would sink but not explode. When surfaced mines couldn't be sunk, they would be approached by boats,

[32] For information on the sinking of *Ilmarinen*, see, for example, Grooss 2017:152-153.
[33] Auvinen 2005:506-507.
[34] The text is mainly based on Auvinen 2005. See also the contemporary film, *Meret vapaiksi* (1946).
[35] Some areas also in the Bothnian Sea were cleared from mines during the post-war demining period.

and the explosive material would be taken manually from the mine casing. The basic method of demining was modified to neutralize also magnetic and acoustic mines. Demining equipment nicknamed *pölkky* (Eng. "log") caused a change in the underwater magnetic fields that forced a magnetic mine to detonate. Demining equipment nicknamed *melukoho* (Eng. "noise float") and *paukkuputki* (Eng. "bang pipe") that were dragged on the surface detonated acoustic mines by the sound they created.

2.4 The remaining sea mines and demining operations today

Ironically, even as the most dangerous sea mines for surface ships were cleared by the minesweepers' dangerous work in the years after the war, the number of destroyed mines was, and still is, only a fraction of the total number of sea mines left in the Gulf of Finland, which measures some tens of thousands of mines. Demining in the Baltic Sea continues to this day. Estonia is one of the three Baltic countries (along with Latvia and Lithuania) that annually host in turns the multinational demining mission Open Spirit in the three countries' waters. Operation Open Spirit has been carried out annually since 1997.[37] Modern demining technology has made these missions far safer than the post-war ones, and there has been no news of minesweeper casualties in last years. This is also due to the depth of remaining mines[38] and their weakened condition.[39] Demining is estimated to continue for hundreds of years to come.[40]

Even as the explosive material of the mines has weakened over time, they can still be dangerous. The remaining mines don't usually pose a risk to surface vessels, but they are a potential risk for example to trawling and the laying of underwater pipelines.[41] Drifting mines (i.e. mine casings that have detached from their anchors) can be dangerous to surface vessels, however. Destroying the mines creates also an environmental impact, as each mine explosion releases toxic material to the sea, posing a threat to maritime biodiversity.[42]

[37] For articles on Open Spirit missions, see: *Navy Recognition* 24.5.2019: LSM.LV 1.9.2017.
[38] Unswept mines that were originally attached to their anchors might also have sunk to the bottom, as their mine casings have filled with water due to degradation over time (Kämäräinen 2005:39).
[39] During a mine clearing task in Loviisa in 2010, Leo Vehmola from the Navy noted that the mine, made in 1941, was still fully operational. *Loviisan Sanomat* 13.8.2010.
[40] This online article cites 800 years and contains information on modern demining practices and problems: *The Baltic Course* 8.5.2010.
[41] *Tekniikka & Talous* 10.12.2009.
[42] Yle 16.6.2018.

3 MINESWEEPER MEMORIALS IN FINLAND

Post-war demining in the Gulf of Finland was carried out mainly by Finnish minesweepers. This is echoed by the relatively high number of Finnish minesweepers dead or wounded during the post-war demining years (28 dead and 35 wounded). This is why the minesweepers themselves called the demining operations a ”*continuation war of Continuation War*”,[43] emphasising the dangerous nature of the endeavour.

There are currently ten memorials in Finland that can be classified as minesweeper memorials commemorating post-war demining, the oldest one unveiled in 1961 and the most recent one in 2018, located mainly in coastal cities in southern and southwestern Finland. Most of the memorials were constructed in a relatively short period of time, from the late 1990s to early 2000s, in something that might be called a ”minesweeper memorial boom”. The following analysis is an attempt to understand the ways in which the memory of post-war demining is materialized in the memorial structures, and the reasons for the rapid appearance of most of these monuments inside a short time span.

The study is based on observations of the physical features of the memorials and the surroundings of the memorial sites, and on information obtained about the background of the memorials, including photographic record on the ritual use of the sites.[44] The memorial study is methodologically a comparative analysis, where all relevant aspects of the memorials (visuality, textuality, location and use) are analysed and compared between each site and structure.

At the Helsinki memorial site, a visitor behaviour observation was carried out by the author in July 2018, seeking to uncover how the public actually observes, ignores or uses the sites. The Helsinki site was chosen for observation due to its location in a busy spot frequented by tens of people every hour (a fact also due to the time and weather prevalent during the observation time, a Saturday evening with warm summer weather, ideal for an observation of locals using their free time in the location). The findings of the observation are incorporated into the wider analysis of the use of the sites.

The sites discussed in the study can briefly be introduced by the information in Table 1, as well as by the photos of each memorial (Fig. 1-10) referred to in the table. In Table 1, *year* refers

[43] The original Finnish term is *jatkosodan jatkosota*.
[44] For example, the photo gallery of the Helsinki memorial’s unveiling ceremony and the associated banquet on the Minesweeper Guild’s website: http://miinanraivaajakilta.com/kuvagalleria.htm

Location	*Year*	*Type*	*Figure*
Haapasaari	1961	abstract	1
Hamina	1972	object; mine	2
Turku	1996	object; mine-anchor	3
Turku[45]	1997	object; mine	4
Uusikaupunki	1999	object; mine-anchor	5
Pori	2000	object; mine-anchor	6
Kalajoki	2002	object; mine-anchor	7
Helsinki	2004	object; mine	8
Hanko	2013	object; mine-anchor	9
Turku	2018	object; sonar	10

Table 1. *Minesweeper memorials in Finland*.[46]

to the year when the memorial was unveiled; *type* refers to a preliminary typology created by the author to differentiate between different memorial types. The typology is based on the physical appearance of the memorial structures, and the terms used are specified further in the text. The minesweeper memorials in Finland form a distinctive subgroup of Finnish WWII-related memorials, in which the use of authentic, eye-catching contact mines is typically a dominant attribute of the memorials' physical appearance.

Commemoration of post-war demining can be thought to have been begun in the decades following the ending of large-scale demining in the 1950s, as testified by the oldest memorial constructed in 1961.[47] Commemoration increased notably, however, from the 1990s, as now already aged minesweeper veterans organized to form Minesweeper Guilds (in Turku in 1994, and in Helsinki in 1997).[48] Minesweepers gained a minesweeper medallion in 1993, and an official veteran status

[45] This is the only memorial site that has been moved. The monument was moved from its original location in the Korppolaismäki district of Turku to a more prominent location closer to downtown Turku in the summer of 2018. See: *Turun Sanomat* 26.6.2018b.
[46] Background information on the memorials discussed in the text is combined from the following works: Huttunen & Paavola 2011:56-58, 167-169; Pakola 2012; Pakola 2017.
[47] The oldest minesweeper memorials in Finland are, however, the monuments in Jurmo and Hästö-Busö islands, commemorating minesweepers who died in demining after 1918. The memorials were constructed in the interwar period.
[48] Officially the guilds are separate (Miinanraivaajakilta ry in Turku and Helsingin miinanraivaajakilta ry in Helsinki); as both are Minesweeper Guilds (miinanraivaajakilta), and as their organizational aims are the same, they are not specified in this text.

finally in 2000. Minesweeper recollection literature also began to increase during the turn of the millennium.[49]

The memorials are connected to the wider phenomenon of raising awareness in the late 1990s and early 21st century of minesweepers' contributions in demining in the post-war era. Between 1996 and 2004, there was a ”boom” in minesweeper memorial construction, as six of the eleven sites were constructed in the span of only eight years. The ”boom” culminated in the construction and ceremonial unveiling of the exquisite memorial in the capital city. The role of the Minesweeper Guild is important to note here, as it was the Guild that initiated the construction of minesweeper memorials during this time. The whole ”boom” can be thought of as material means in the effort to gain official and public recognition by the minesweeper veterans themselves, as it coincides with other minesweeper activity of the same years. In this respect, the memorials served the minesweeper veterans still alive by bringing them recognition; ”efforts to erect memorials crescendo as the last survivors seek to bear final witness for future generations”.[50] Of course, the occurrence of the ”boom” in the turn of the millennium can't be explained by these facts alone, as remembering the war in different media and the related memorial construction were both booming in the 1990s[51] – thus, minesweeper commemoration was part of a larger phenomenon of the increased commemoration of war.

In Finland, the memorial landscape is strongly nationalist and war-oriented, and memorials of WWII are especially abundant.[52] It is this context of the material commemoration of war in Finland that this study is connected to; as post-war demining became to be recognized as a war activity extending beyond the war era, so the Finnish war memorial culture also expanded to include demining in its sphere of military memorialization.

3.1 Visuality

Minesweeper memorials are, in comparison to Finnish war memorials in general, characteristic in their incorporation of real, once dangerous sea mines into the memorial structures. Not all memorial structures use mines, however, as is indicated by the use of a sonar in the most recent memorial (Fig.

[49] Salmelin & Auvinen 1995; Erwes & Joutsenniemi 2004; Brusi 2005; Kalmeenoja 2011; Pakola 2012; Pakola 2017.
[50] Foote & Azaryahu 2007:129. ”Dying out” of survivors of past wars as a catalyst for memorialization is also noted by Kidd and Murdoch (Kidd & Murdoch 2004:3-4) and Doss (Doss 2008:230).
[51] For a deeper understanding of the commemoration of war in the 1990s, see Kivimäki and Kinnunen's work (Kivimäki & Kinnunen 2011) that explores the changing landscapes of war commemoration in Finland from the post-war era to this day. The early 1990s, marking the 50th anniversary of WWII, have also been noted for increased commemoration elsewhere in the West (Evans & Lunn 1997).
[52] See, for example, Kormano 2014.

10); even in this case, though, an object related to maritime military culture is still preferred. Only one of the memorials, the oldest one (Fig. 1), doesn't incorporate an object, but uses a more abstract materiality. Both the object-oriented and the abstract monumental materialities, however, reach for the same end; "whether figurative or abstract, war memorials are attempts to represent violent death in a rational and meaningful way".[53]

Most of the memorial structures share notable uniformities in their appearance, but with some anomalous sites. Most of the sites incorporate a real WWII-era neutralized contact mine, usually atop a mine anchor. These memorials are termed here as *mine-anchor-memorials*. The mines in these memorials are usually Finnish contact mines, most usually of the S/43 model. The use of a much older Russian mine Ma/1 from WWI era in the memorial of downtown Turku is a distinguishable anomaly (Fig. 4). A possible explanation for such an atypical choice for a mine might be the fact that when the memorial was unveiled in 1997, there already was a mine-anchor-memorial with a WWII contact mine in Turku, unveiled in the previous year in the Pansio district of Turku (Fig. 3), making it preferable not to replicate the same appearance in the same city.

In the Helsinki memorial (Fig. 8), the mine "levitates" over the cubic pedestal in a more artistic way than in the conventional mine-anchor-memorials, and the anchor has been replaced with a polished granite cube. The Helsinki memorial is arguably based on its style on the earlier mine-anchor-memorials, but being made in a more exquisite manner, possibly because the memorial was erected in the capital city, in an easily accessible location in the Katajanokka district and with the textuality of the multilingual text plaque making the meaning of the site internationally accessible, so that more attention was put to its appearance. The Hamina memorial (Fig. 2) predates conventional mine-anchor memorials, but seems to hold the origin of the idea in its appearance based on the elevated contact mine. The conventional mine-anchor memorials also convey a sense of rather hastily created memorial structures, with little attention paid to architectural creativity. The birth of a convention in a memorial type is interesting, as the mine-anchor type became prevalent in the 1990s. This concentration in the similarity of the visuality of most of the minesweeper memorials arguably aimed and succeeded in creating not only individual memorials, but a group of related memorials scattered around the country.

The use of real historical objects incorporated in the memorials is a distinctive trait of

[53] Kattago 2009:151.

Figure 1. *The memorial in Haapasaari*. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 2. *The memorial in Hamina*. Photo: Visit Hamina. Used by permission.

Figure 3. *The memorial in the ”gun hill”, Pansio, Turku*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

Figure 4. *The memorial currently in downtown Turku*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

Figure 5. *The memorial in Uusikaupunki*. Photo: Uusikaupunki Museum. Used by permission.

Figure 6. *The memorial in Pori*. Photo: Satakunta Maritime Historical Society. Used by permission.

Figure 7. *The memorial in Kalajoki*. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 8. *The memorial in Helsinki.* Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 9. *The memorial in Hanko*. Photo: Hanko Museum. Used by permission.

Figure 10. *The most recent memorial in Pansio, Turku*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

minesweeper memorials.[54] The use of real neutralized mines in the memorials reinforces the sense of the reality of demining, as the fact that the mines on the memorials were once dangerous reinforces the message of demining. The centrality of the ball-shaped contact mine topped with Hertz horns, the most recognizable type of the sea mines used, the dangerous object that the minesweepers were destroying with risking their health and lives, in many of the memorials is an obvious symbol to symbolize demining, which victims and survivors are being commemorated. Semiotically, the sea mine is an index of war and death in a maritime environment, and its meaning as a symbol for demining in the memorials is learned from the textuality of the memorial plaques accompanying the memorial structures. In other words, the visuality of the memorial structures is not enough to convey the message of the memorials.

The Haapasaari memorial (Fig. 1) is probably the most anomalous site in its appearance, with a bronze plaque projecting from a war era air defence casemate. The meaning of the monument is confined to its textuality, with no hints at mines in its physical appearance. The casemate itself connects to military history but has nothing to do with demining. The anomality of the appearance of the site might be attributed to it being the oldest memorial, as the use of mines in later memorials became a convention decades later.

The most recent memorial in Pansio, Turku (Fig. 10) is also distinctively anomalous in its appearance. The sonar used in the memorial is a Klein side scan sonar, originally used aboard *Kampela 3*, a transport vessel from the late 1970s.[55] Once again, the anomalous appearance of the memorial might be explained by it being the third minesweeper memorial in Turku, with the other two memorials already in the same city incorporating mines in the memorial structures, creating a pressure to construct a memorial with a different look.

The memorial structures usually include stone slabs, usually as platforms for the mine anchors, and as platforms for garland offerings. The use of grey granite reinforces the symbolism of grey colour in the memorial structures, being the symbol of the passage of time, and of death and sorrow, used in memorials in general. Use of stone mounds is restricted to the Haapasaari and Hamina memorials (Fig. 1, Fig. 2); especially the Hamina memorial's pedestal structure can be attributed to Kormano's "cobblestone aesthetics",[56] an architectural feature found in some other Finnish war memorials.

[54] Authentic remains of war incorporated into memorial structures in Finland are rare. They are used notably on the memorial of the Lapland War in Röyttä harbour, unveiled in 1994 (see Kormano 2014:420-421).
[55] Mika Raunu (Navy), e-mail correspondence, 4.11.2019.
[56] *Mukulakiviestetiikka* in Finnish; Kormano 2014:91-95.

3.2 Textuality

All memorial structures are accompanied by text plaques attached to the memorial structures. The plaques inform the visitor about the meaning of the monument, and they are sometimes accompanied with a second plaque with technical information about the mine on the memorial. The textuality of the memorials is fairly uniform, but with notable anomalies.

The meaning of the memorials as interpreted from the commemorative plaque texts is to commemorate the minesweepers, who risked or gave their lives and health to make the Gulf of Finland safe for movement in the sea. There are, however, differences in who actually are being commemorated in the texts of different memorials; *those who died* during demining as in Haapasaari (being the only memorial with the military ranks, names and dates of death of those commemorated), as most later memorials seem to commemorate *those who survived* post-war demining (i.e. minesweeper veterans), without mentioning the casualties, but emphasizing veterans. The recent Pansio memorial commemorates demining of the whole hundred-year time span of Finland's independence, from 1918 to this day. The memorial in Hamina doesn't explicitly commemorate wartime or post-war demining, but is dedicated to a mine company; the memorial is however sometimes interpreted as a minesweeper memorial, and as mine troops trained in the company usually both laid and cleared mines, it can be classified as one. The memorial on the ”gun hill” in Pansio likewise commemorates mine troops as well as the Finnish mines themselves.

One of the central aspects of the narratives about post-war demining, recurring from post-war era to this day, the securing of Finland's maritime trade as the most important reason for the importance of post-war demining,[57] is mentioned only in the texts of the Haapasaari memorial (”for the vital conditions of our fatherland”[58]) and the memorial on the ”gun hill” of Pansio (where both mine troops and mines as a defensive weapon are commemorated for their contributions in ”protecting maritime traffic”), whereas the memorials in Pori and Kalajoki only mention the minesweepers making ”our seas free to sail”. Interestingly, similar memorial structures are used to commemorate both the acts of laying and destroying mines, and both the *people* performing these acts as well as the *objects* themselves. The textualities of the memorials emphasise demining as a national and social duty, with the latter citations expressing a rather democratic perspective on the

[57] The narrative was seemingly born in the post-war era, as it is already mentioned in the minesweeper footage *Meret vapaiksi* (1946). The longevity of the narrative, as it reappears in the memorial structures of the 1960s and 1990s (as mentioned in the text), as well as in minesweeper recollections in general (see earlier cites), testifies to the centrality of the narrative in the commemoration of demining by the minesweepers themselves. See also Komulainen's work (Komulainen 2000).

[58] Translations of the original Finnish plaque texts are the author's.

use of the sea, as the act of sailing can be thought to include the aesthetic and leisure meanings of sailing as well as merely maritime traffic.

The origins of most minesweeper memorials in the minesweeper veteran community, and the comparison of demining endeavour to war activity, are indicators of how minesweeper veterans experienced their dangerous work and why and how they wanted their memory to be acknowledged and remembered. As Mosse states, veterans usually have an ”urge to find a higher meaning in the war experience, and to obtain some justification for the sacrifice and loss.”[59] The narrative of a war fought against mines in order to make the seas safe and free for maritime traffic aimed both to recognize demining as a service comparable to service in the frontline, and to gain such a justification for the losses experienced at sea.

The fact that such an extensive demining operation was due to peace terms of a country that had lost a war, is actually indicated only on the Haapasaari and Hanko memorials, which state that demining was initiated due to Finland being ”obliged by the peace terms”. The fulfilling of this obligation, then, poses Finland as a state that makes sure to keep its word, even as the phrase also involves the acknowledgement that the war was lost. The phrase also reveals the political reality behind the demining endeavour, giving space for thought for the visitor to ponder such issues as the meaning of losing a war, the obligation of the lost side to compensate the winner, and the issue of young men drawn to fulfil this dangerous task resulting from the state’s political manoeuvring following the Soviet victory in the Continuation War.

There is no mention of the other nationalities who cleared mines in the Gulf of Finland in the post-war years, giving the memorials a nationalist tone. Finnish patriotism is, however, explicit only on the language of the Haapasaari memorial, with its use of the concept of fatherland (most notably on the memorial’s Latin name, *pro partia*, meaning *for the fatherland*, on sizeable relief letters) and the mention of ”sacrificing their lives for the vital conditions of our fatherland”, expressing the use of the concept of patriotic martyrdom.[60]

Nationalist tones can also be an explanation for the use of a shortened piece of poetry from the national epic *Kalevala* (poem 43) in the Pansio ”gun hill” memorial’s text plaque; the poem used in the plaque, in its original longer version, depicts a mythical scene where the magician-hero Väinämöinen summons a shoal from the sea, into which the following enemy ship from Pohjola runs

[59] Mosse 1990:6.
[60] ”War memorials continue the religious (particularly Christian) tradition of martyrdom in which death is a passageway from one form of existence to another” (Kattago 2009:151). ”Having been sacrificed on behalf of the nation, the dead gain the status of morally cleansed icons” (Whitmarsh 2001).

aground. The magically summoned shoal symbolizes a sea mine, and Väinämöinen and his ship symbolize the Finnish mine troops who defend the Finnish waters from the enemy. Worthy of note in this instance of commemorating and depicting the sea mines themselves is the mythological connections created by the memorial's textuality, and the emphasis on the portrayal of Finnish sea mines as a defensive, not an offensive, weapon.

Nationalism can be also the explanation for the use of Finnish as the sole language in most memorial sites, excluding the Latin used in Haapasaari memorial (with Latin's obvious connections to the conception of Western civilization), the current multilingual plaque of the Helsinki memorial (with the text in Finnish, Swedish, English, German and Russian), and the bilingual plaque of the Hanko memorial (using Finnish and Swedish, the official languages of Finland). In the Helsinki memorial, English is included possibly both for its internationality in the 21st century, but maybe also in consideration of British tourists, who were one of the most notable tourist groups in Finland in 2004. German and Russian might be included for the same reason, as in 2004 these nationalities were also among the biggest tourist nationalities in Finland.[61] It is also possible that these latter two languages were chosen also due to the nationalities' historical connection to the events that resulted in tens of thousands of mines being laid in the Gulf of Finland, expressing a conciliatory rather than a patriotic tone. Overall, the Helsinki memorial's multilingualism can be seen as an attempt to receive also international recognition to minesweepers, keeping in mind the memorial's location in a prominent district of the capital city.

The overall anomality of the textuality of the Haapasaari memorial in relation to the rest of the memorials can be attributed to its historical context, as there was only a short time from the war and patriotic commemoration was common,[62] and as the memorial was constructed by the surviving minesweepers *to* those who had died in the post-war years, as the later memorials seem to focus on the recognition of those who survived.

Only few of all the sites actually inform more about the background of post-war demining or the number of mines in the Gulf of Finland. Some mention the number of men and vessels that took part in demining and the casualties (mentioned in Haapasaari and Helsinki), and additional information like the political background (”obliged by the peace terms” mentioned in the Haapasaari and Hanko memorials), as well as the number of mines laid in the Gulf of Finland during

[61] In 2004, the biggest foreign tourist nationalities in Finland were (with number of nights spent): Swedes (608,765), Germans (543,114), Russians (447,210) and British (410,310). Data obtained from Statistics Service Rudolf.
[62] The period of remembering the war from the beginning of the post-war era to the 1960s has been called the *patriotic memory landscape* (Kivimäki & Kinnunen 2011).

WWII (mentioned in Helsinki), or the number of mines destroyed in the post-war years (mentioned in the Hanko memorial).

The Kalajoki memorial is the only site whose textuality connects the memorial to the local community, as it mentions the 16 local minesweepers who took part in demining. This makes the memorial a local as well as a national monument. The reason for the emphasis on locality here might be explained by the memorial's anomalous location far away from the actual post-war demining area, making it important to explain why events that unfolded in the Gulf of Finland are commemorated in Kalajoki.

Some of the sites have an additional text plaque, explaining the technical properties of the mines incorporated in the memorials. The reason for the use of these additional information plaques for the mines is probably explained by the fact that the monuments incorporate real historical objects, creating a need to explain what the object is and ensuring that the visitor knows that the object on the memorial is real, thus creating an aura of authenticity on the site and reinforcing the message mediated at the site.

The textuality of the memorials mediates a historical narrative of the objects, the sea mines, as both a defensive weapon that protected Finnish waters, as well as a fearful weapon whose finding and neutralizing was a dangerous task comparable to warfare, expressing a deeply divided cultural perception of the mines. The memorials also mediate a narrative of people, of the minesweepers, who are portrayed as the forgotten veterans of a forgotten war fought against the mines in order to open the Finnish waters to safe maritime traffic, vital for a country rebuilding itself from the devastation of war. The narrative of the memorials is dominated by the voice of the former minesweepers; the narrative isn't, thus, dictated by official gratitude for those who sacrificed or dangered themselves for the state, like in many war memorials, but by those who actually experienced what is being commemorated in the memorials. Minesweeper memorials are mostly community memorials, materializing a group memory; they exemplify "collective remembrance as the outcome of agency, as the product of individuals and groups who come together, not at the behest of the state or any of its subsidiary organizations, but because they have to speak out".[63] The need to commemorate demining stemmed from the minesweeper veteran community, and the private memories of veterans. The Haapasaari memorial differs from these later community memorials in representing an official rather than a community interpretation of the memory of demining. This difference in the background of the memorials might also explain the overall difference, both visual

[63] Winter & Sivan 1999:9.

and textual, of the monument from the minesweeper veterans' preferred mine-anchor -memorials and their lack of patriotic emphasis.

3.3 Location

Like memorials in general, the minesweeper memorials are set in park settings, usually surrounded by trees and lawn. The memorials are all located in coastal localities, where the maritime connection symbolizes the actual setting of the historical demining missions whose victims are being commemorated. There are differences, however, related to the memorials' location in relation to the history of post-war demining, their integration to the surrounding cultural and memorial landscapes, and their accessibility.

Many of the sites are actually located in southwestern Finland, on the coasts of the Archipelago Sea and the Bothnian Sea, not in the Gulf of Finland, where most of the post-war demining operations took place. Turku, located by the Archipelago Sea, is the only locality in Finland having more than one memorial, as there are three minesweeper memorials in the city, two of them located in the Pansio district with its connections to naval military history[64] (and with its own mine museum, discussed in the next chapter). The number of minesweeper memorials in Turku might be explained by the notable minesweeper veteran activity in the area especially in the 1990s (as the city is home to the oldest Minesweeper Guild).

The Kalajoki memorial has the most anomalous location, as it is located by the Bothnian Bay, well outside the historical demining area. As discussed earlier, the remote location is probably the reason why Kalajoki minesweepers who took part in post-war demining in the Gulf of Finland and adjacent waters are emphasized in the memorial's textuality, so as to explain the memorial's peculiar location.

Usually the memorials are located in places with connections to the history of mines and demining: in localities close to the waters that were cleared from mines during the post-war years (all localities excluding Kalajoki); in localities that had WWII-era mine manufacture and storage facilities (Hamina, Uusikaupunki, Turku, Helsinki); close to mine troop training sites (Hamina, Hanko); in localities that had demining fleet quays (Turku, Helsinki, Haapasaari); in localities that produced demining vessels (Turku); in localities that had demining equipment manufacture or

[64] The naval garrison of Turku was founded in Pansio in 1939. The naval garrison is still one of the two main garrisons of the Finnish Navy.

maintenance facilities (Uusikaupunki); and close to places where actual casualties occurred (especially Haapasaari).[65]

Worthy of note is also the fact that a considerable number of the memorials are located in places where minesweeper veteran organizations have been active during the turn of the millennium (in Turku and Helsinki, most notably). This might be interpreted as a need by minesweeper veterans to have memorials physically close to them, so that the sites might be used by them in commemorative rituals or to enhance recognition in a local level.

Sometimes the memorials integrate well to the surrounding cultural and memorial landscape, especially when the cultural milieu has a strong maritime connection, or when the memorial is set close to many other maritimely and militarily associated memorials. The Pori memorial, for example, forms a continuum to the Reposaari memorial landscape with its other maritimely and militarily associated memorials. The memorials in downtown Turku, Pori, Kalajoki and Helsinki are all located near harbour installations, connecting them to a living maritime culture. The older memorial in Pansio is set in the Navy's "gun hill" among many other military materiel, with a strong naval military emphasis.

The accessibility of the sites varies. Memorials integrated in urban landscapes, like the downtown Turku or the Helsinki memorial, are the most accessible, visited (but not necessarily explored) by lots of people every day. The Kalajoki memorial is also accessible, located near a visitor harbour, and just a kilometre from the famous tourist attraction, the Kalajoki Sandbanks. Many sites, however, are set in more peripheral parts of the localities, like the suburban Pansio district in Turku with its two memorials, or the memorial in the dockyard area in Uusikaupunki. The most inaccessible location, however, is Haapasaari, as it can be reached only by boat from Kotka, requiring considerable motivation to visit the skerry instead of just walking by a memorial in an urban area.

Even as the memorials are located in coastal cities and towns, the memorials' proximity to the sea varies, from simply being located in a coastal locality to actually being close to the sea, so that the sea forms a symbolically important part of the memorial scene, enforcing the mine's maritime connection and the memorial's message. The memorial sites don't, however, usually have a line of sight to the open sea; the horizons of the memorials located by the sea usually consist of forested opposite shores (in Pori) or both forested and urban opposite shores (in Helsinki). The Kalajoki memorial has a line of sight to the open sea from the memorial, but most of the horizon is filled with a forested opposite shore. In Haapasaari, where the maritime connection is obvious due to the place

[65] Auvinen 2005.

being a skerry in the middle of the sea, the memorial site is actually located in the middle of the skerry, with about a 100 m to the closest shore. It seems that a coastal locality has been preferred but a close proximity to the sea has not been an important criterion in placing the sites.

3.4 Use

As public monuments, the memorials are used by different groups in different ways. People using the sites can be broadly classified into two groups: the *official*, ritual users (i.e. organized minesweeper veterans, the Navy) and the *unofficial* users, the public. Most of the sites (especially since the 1990s) have been the product of organized minesweeper veteran activity. The way that demining has been commemorated in these memorials, their materiality, setting and textuality, and the need to materialize the memory of demining, are all usually mediated through the views of this group. The ritual use of the memorials is also primarily carried out by this group.

The ritual use of the sites has mainly been confined to the unveiling ceremonies and organized visits on different annual events, usually during ceremonies carried out by the Navy. These rituals follow a common ceremonial convention, including honorary guests, honorary guards, Finnish and military flags, Navy fanfares, banquets, ceremonial speeches and poems etc. with the garland offering connecting the ritual to the monument. As Mitchell points out, the ritual use of memorials means a temporal movement of the sites from passive to dynamic space.[66] Interestingly, the unveiling dates and other garland offering rituals of the sites are dated to sailing months, as the Gulf of Finland and adjacent waters are covered by ice in winter, symbolically reinforcing the memorials' connection to the history of demining, as demining operations ceased for winter months.

To former minesweeper veterans, who initiated the construction of the memorials, the memorial sites are communal and personal places of connecting to their collective past as minesweepers, and places to commemorate their fellow minesweepers who have passed away. The use of the memorial sites for personal commemoration of those involved in post-war demining reinforces their funerary dimension; the memorial structures are symbolically collective graves of the deceased minesweepers, as the garland offerings resemble the flowers brought to graves in a cemetery.

As public monuments usually integrated in urban landscapes, the memorials are also part of the collective reality of the public, and used by them in different ways. In a way, this is actually

[66] Mitchell 2003:446.

the group that the memorials are constructed for, as the memorials are meant to inform this group about the importance of remembering the minesweepers' contributions. In this way, this is the broadest and most diverse group whom the memorials can be thought to serve. Observation carried out on the Helsinki memorial, however, revealed that most passers-by didn't pay much attention to the memorial, with few people actually stopping to explore the memorial. Reading the text of the memorial, after all, is the prerequisite for understanding the meaning of the memorial. Instead, the memorial platform, with a possibility to sit on its edge, was used as a social space by some.[67] Reasons for the lack of interest or deference towards the memorial vary, possibly due to many factors, for example passers-by being local people who have already explored the memorial before and don't feel a need to explore it further. A further study of peoples' attitudes and behaviour in WWII memorial sites in Finland is required to answer the question whether there are differences in peoples' behaviour on memorial sites commemorating different aspects of the war and using different material and textual forms; the lack of nationalist ethos or easily perceivable iconography in the materiality and textuality of minesweeper memorials, for example, might affect peoples' behaviour on the sites.

In conclusion, as military monuments, minesweeper memorials have been easily adopted as a part of an already existing maritime military commemorative culture with its own rituals carried out on the memorial sites. The meaning of the memorials to the general public, however, seems to be more neutral, lacking the emotional intensity of the reactions to some other WWII memorials is Finland, which are more deeply entrenched into the collective memory and narratives of war in Finnish culture than the narrative of post-war demining mediated by the minesweeper memorials.

[67] See Inglis 1992:18-19 for a discussion on indifferent and disrespectful use of memorial sites by the public.

4 SEA MINE EXHIBITIONS

The following analysis compares two mine exhibitions, the exhibition of the Pansio mine museum in Turku (Fig. 11-13), and the mine exhibition in the Seaplane Harbour exhibition hall of the Estonian Maritime Museum in Tallinn (Fig. 14-16). The study is based on observations carried out by the author in the two museums in summer 2018, including a guided tour in the Pansio museum. The method used in analysing the exhibitions is comparative analysis, comparing different aspects of the museums (accessibility, visitor experience, use of space, visibility and textuality).

The two exhibitions are dramatically different. The Pansio mine museum was a museum specialized in the storage and exhibition of sea mines. It was located in the Pansio district of Turku, in Finland. The exhibition was opened in 1996 and closed in 2019.[68] The project was initiated and executed by the retired Navy commander Eero Auvinen, who was also the guide of the exhibition tours. The exhibition was located in a former air-raid shelter tunnel owned by the Finnish Defence Forces. The exhibition contained nearly 100 mines of different types and nationalities, mostly from WWII era, but also including older ones, the oldest from the 19th century. The range of objects and the typological variation displayed in the museum were remarkable.[69] As mentioned above, the exhibition is currently closed and the mines are awaiting a new destination in another exhibition space.[70]

The mine exhibition in Tallinn forms a part of a larger maritime historical exhibition in the Seaplane Harbour exhibition hall of the Estonian Maritime Museum. The museum was opened in 2012. The mines were originally exhibited in the earlier Miinimuuseum (mine museum) in Tallinn, which operated from 2002 to 2011 as a museum specialized in sea mines. The Seaplane Harbour exhibition was a big and costly project aimed at big masses, both domestic and foreign. The building itself is considered an architectural masterpiece, the world's first columnless concrete domes of such a remarkable size, built in the late imperial Russian era.[71] The mine exhibition consists of a few dozen of mines, most from WWII era, and some from later decades.

[68] Located in a space owned by the military, the collection was originally founded in the 1920s to train minesweepers. After the Cold War, the collection was deemed unnecessary in a military sense, beginning the process of the mine collection turning into heritage.
[69] For detailed information on the Pansio museum and its exhibition objects, see Auvinen 2002. See also Huttunen & Paavola 2011:174-176. Pansio mine museum has actually donated some mines to the Seaplane Harbour (Eero Auvinen, personal communication, 2018).
[70] *Tekniikka & Talous* 13.2.2019. The material will be relocated in a new exhibition of underwater warfare in Forssa, due to open in spring 2020 (Mikko Meronen, seminary presentation, 12.10.2019, Forum Marinum, Turku).
[71] For information on the Seaplane Harbour, see the museum's official website: http://meremuuseum.ee/lennusadam/en/

Conserving sea mines and displaying them in museum exhibitions tells us that the memory of the objects is kept alive in both sides of the Gulf of Finland, that the objects have museum value (even as they are at the same time being destroyed at the sea[72]) and that there has been enough public interest in them to motivate people to create special museums for sea mines, both in Finland and in Estonia. The current trend, however, shows that there is maybe not enough interest in sea mines alone, as both the Pansio mine museum and the Miinimuuseum have been closed during the 2010s. The mines function perhaps better as an additional interest in larger maritime historical museums, like the former Miinimuuseum mines in their current location in the Seaplane Harbour, or the Pansio mines in their possible future exhibition space. What masses of people are looking for is an exciting plunge into the depths of the historical seas, as the popularity of Seaplane Harbour shows us; the failure of Pansio, as described below, was probably not only due to the place's inaccessibility or lack of marketing, but also due to the exhibition's emphasis on sea mines only. There are, for example, some sea mines included in the main exhibition of Forum Marinum, the maritime historical museum of Turku, where they function as an additional interest, as the mines do in Tallinn.

4.1 Accessibility and visitor experience

There is a clear difference in the accessibility of these two exhibitions, with Seaplane Harbour far more visitor-friendly than the Pansio museum. The Seaplane Harbour is open to visitors the whole year, whereas the Pansio museum is open only for groups by order, which reduces its accessibility significantly in comparison to the former. Seaplane Harbour has also a more accessible location, about 2 km from downtown Tallinn, as the Pansio museum is located about 7 km from downtown Turku.

There is also a dramatic contrast in the marketing of the exhibitions as tourist attractions. Whereas the Seaplane Harbour has a website and can be found in, for example, the TripAdvisor and Visit Estonia websites,[73] Pansio doesn't seem to market itself at all, leaving the promotion of the museum to a few magazine articles[74] and the promotion by Forum Marinum (a maritime museum in

[72] In an article in *The Baltic Course*, a question was posed to the mine clearing company BACTEC of the possibility to offer the remains of mines neutralized during the mine clearing operations to museums, expressing the value credited to WWII-era sea mines in the Baltic (*The Baltic Course* 8.5.2010).
[73] Seaplane Harbour in TripAdvisor website: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g274958-d3214593-Reviews-Lennusadam_Seaplane_Harbour-Tallinn_Harju_County.html
Seaplane Harbour in VisitEstonia website: https://www.visitestonia.com/en/seaplane-harbour-estonian-maritime-museum
[74] *Turun Sanomat* 26.6.2018a; *Suomen Sotilas* 17.7.2018.

Turku).[75] The same problem with promoting tourism is also seen on the language use of the exhibitions. Whereas in Tallinn all information is provided in Estonian, Russian and English, in Pansio the only language used in the information sheets is Finnish.

The exhibitions differ dramatically also in their physical environments. Whereas the Seaplane Harbour exhibition hall is in good condition, the Pansio mine museum, located in an air-raid shelter, is cold and has a poor air quality.[76] Entrance to the museum is on a partially graffiti-covered side of a forested hill, close to an inhabited area of apartment buildings without an appropriate visitor parking lot close by, making visiting groups park at the lawn in front of the hill, reducing the sense of professionality of the exhibition.[77] In contrast, the Seaplane Harbour building is a reconditioned heritage building, easily visible due to its size and the open spaces around it, complete with a parking lot. In Seaplane Harbour, there are toilet facilities, a cafeteria and a museum shop; Pansio lacks all of these. No wonder why the Seaplane Harbour has received many prizes, including Estonia's Most Tourist-Friendly Museum prize in 2012. The lack of the possibilities of using a toilet, or of stopping to sit, reduce the potential of visiting the Pansio museum for families and for people with a disability. The plans of reopening the now closed mine collection in a new space could solve many of the problems of accessibility in the former exhibition.

A major contrast in experiencing the two exhibitions is also the individuality of the experiences: in Seaplane Harbour, visitors usually explore the whole exhibition without a guide, spending as much time at some object or activity as they please, or skipping something altogether, and moving in certain parts of the exhibition hall, like the open lower floor where the mine exhibition is, in an order chosen by the visitors themselves; in Pansio, however, where the exhibition space is more confined, and where every visits are led by a guide, the pace of movement in the space is dictated by the guide, and the need to book a guided visit for a group to the museum requires a collective effort of the visitor group.[78] This also affects visitor behaviour, as in Tallinn the openness of the space and the individuality of the experience makes it easier for groups (for example families) to communicate between themselves more freely and to relax. In Pansio, on the other hand, where attention has to be paid to listening and following the guide, and where the space is more confined, such free communication and relaxation are impossible to achieve.

[75] See a video introducing the museum, published by Forum Marinum in 2018: http://www.forum-marinum.fi/fi/nayttelyt/etakohteet/miinamuseo/

[76] The problems of the exhibition space are also noted in the following article, describing the tunnel as disqualifying as a museum space: *Tekniikka & Talous* 13.2.2019.

[77] In addition, Pansio district has currently the reputation of a "bad suburb", with a high unemployment rate and known for social problems.

[78] For example, in 2018, the museum was visited by two visitor groups (*Turun Sanomat* 26.6.2018a).

The dramatic difference between the accessibility of the two exhibitions might be explained with the very different kinds of strategies and resources behind the exhibition projects: the primary purpose of the Seaplane Harbour in general is to preserve maritime history and to make profit by marketing and popularizing it to the public, having considerable funding, staff and a strategy; Pansio, whose collection was originally used as training material to mine troops, preserves objects of maritime history with a highly specialized focus, seeming to lack both funding, staff and a strategy of marketing the museum. The possibility to join a guided tour of the collection free of charge[79] also distances the *raison d'être* of the Pansio exhibition from the cash-making enterprise of Tallinn, resting on the activity of the collection's designer and guide, Eero Auvinen.

There are differences both in the target groups the two exhibitions aim to attract, and the motivations of visitors visiting the exhibitions. The Seaplane Harbour is a multi-target attraction, as it targets families, people interested in maritime history and culture, and people interested in military history. The mine exhibition falls more in the latter two categories. In Pansio, however, the visitor targeting seems narrower, as it concentrates in military history, although attracting a considerable number of military history enthusiasts in Finland.

In Tallinn, visitors of the Seaplane Harbour arguably expect entertainment, excitement, learning, a sense of connection to a collective past, and especially the families visiting the museum, a shared experience. In Pansio, the visitors certainly expect to see authentic WWII material, and so to experience their aura of authenticity, to learn about them and to connect to the past. Connecting to the past, Hirsch's *postmemory*,[80] gives the visitor a sense of continuity and community, as the objects relate to major national histories of warfare in both Finland and Estonia. Both exhibitions relate also to the larger phenomenon of fascination in war and death, especially in WWII, possibly relating to a need to communicate with the difficult collective memories of recent history.

4.2 Space and visuality

The layout of the objects in the two exhibitions is remarkably different. In Pansio, the movement of the visitor is generally linear, with focus split in two halves of the exhibition tunnel (Fig. 11), with the exception of two separate exhibition rooms in the end of the tunnel (Fig. 12, Fig. 13). The mine exhibition in Tallinn actually has a reverse layout, as the prominences rising from the floor,

[79] *Turun Sanomat* 26.6.2018.
[80] See, for example, Hirsch 2008.

representing reliefs on the seafloor, situated in the center of the mine exhibition (Fig. 15) force the visitor to *circle* the assemblage of objects, the movement being fairly elliptical.

The layout in Pansio is based on chronology,[81] with clearly separated chronological sections, whereas in Tallinn the layout is more typology-oriented, with mines of the same mode of operation or context (e.g. Estonian training mines, mines of the *Lembit* submarine[82]) placed together, but with the older (WWII) mines in the other half of the exhibition space, and the more recent ones in the other. The boundaries of the sections in Tallinn, however, are not as clearly separated and melt together into one mine assemblage.

The objects in the two exhibitions are also arranged in contrasting ways. In Pansio, the mines fill the walls of the exhibition tunnel, usually atop pedestals; in Tallinn, the mines are set in a more haphazard fashion, like they would actually lie on the seabed (as the lower floor of the Tallinn museum actually is designed to represent a sea floor), with some of the mines held in the air above their anchors, just like they would have looked like floating in the bottom of the sea during WWII.

Movement in the exhibition spaces influences the overall experience of the exhibitions. In Pansio, the lack of traversable space in the tunnel packed with objects on both sides makes the experience of moving in the space more uncomfortable than in Tallinn, where the visitor does not feel tightly surrounded by objects. In Pansio, the visitor moves along the tunnel, looking right and left alternately, whereas in Tallinn the visitor doesn't have to switch one's line of sight so radically all the time. The movement episode in Pansio ends in the rooms in the end of the tunnel, making the return to the entrance repeat everything seen already, making the surprise effect stop in the last room in the end of the tunnel, whereas in Tallinn, no such return is required and the surprise effect remains for the whole movement around the mine assemblage. The use of light also gives the two exhibitions a different experience, as in Pansio the space is moderately bright, contrasted to the dark blue underwater atmosphere sought after in Tallinn, which reinforces the surprise effect, as objects in the other end of the assemblage are figured from a distance, but exploring them more closely requires the visitor to approach them.

The differences in the layouts of the two exhibitions can be attributed to different factors. The Tallinn museum is, first of all, a tourist attraction, designed to give the visitor an

[81] The theme of the exhibition is the 140-year history – or 160-year, as it actually was during my visit before the exhibition was closed after 20 years of operation – of sea mines in Finnish waters, beginning from the Crimean War; most of the mines, however, date from the WWII era (Auvinen 2002).
[82] One of the main attractions of the museum, *Lembit* was used by the Soviet Baltic Fleet during WWII, and was also used as a minelaying submarine.

Figure 11. *The main hallway, Pansio. Mines fill the walls of the exhibition tunnel*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

Figure 12. *The entrance to the end room of the exhibition, Pansio*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

Figure 13. *Mines in the end room of the exhibition tunnel, Pansio. Information, mainly technical, about each individual object is presented before each object. Historical photographs with information of mine use are presented along the walls of the room*. Photo: Forum Marinum. Used by permission.

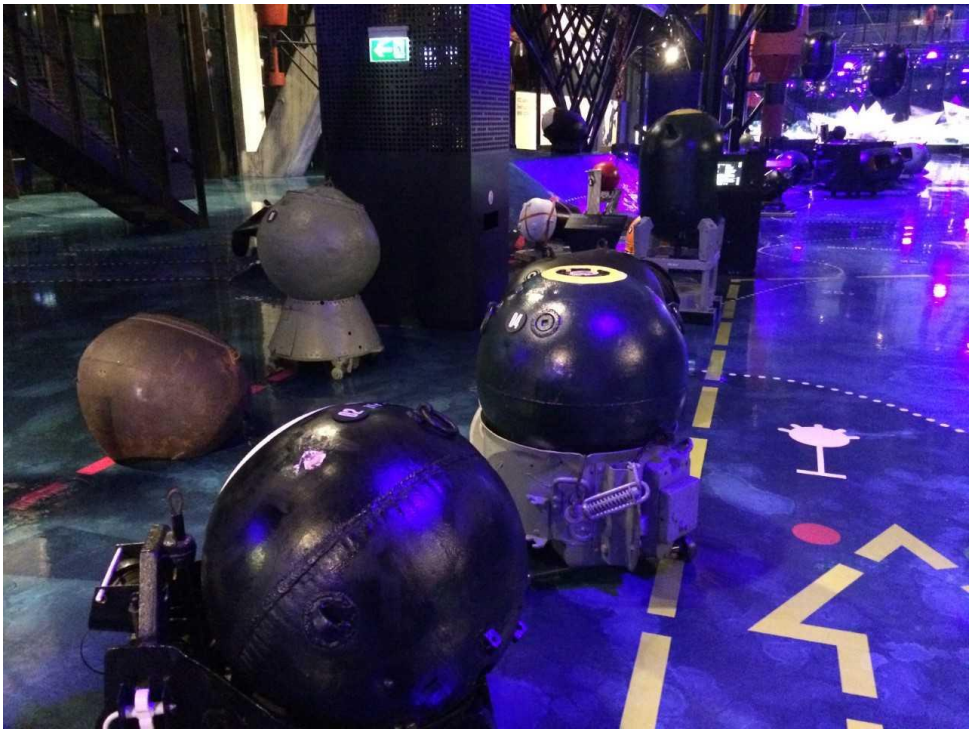

Figure 14. *A view of the mine exhibition from a visitor perspective, Tallinn*. Photo: Estonian Maritime Museum. Used by permission.

Figure 15. *The mines are along and atop "ridges" imitating the geomorphology of the seafloor, Tallinn*. Photo: Estonian Maritime Museum. Used by permission.

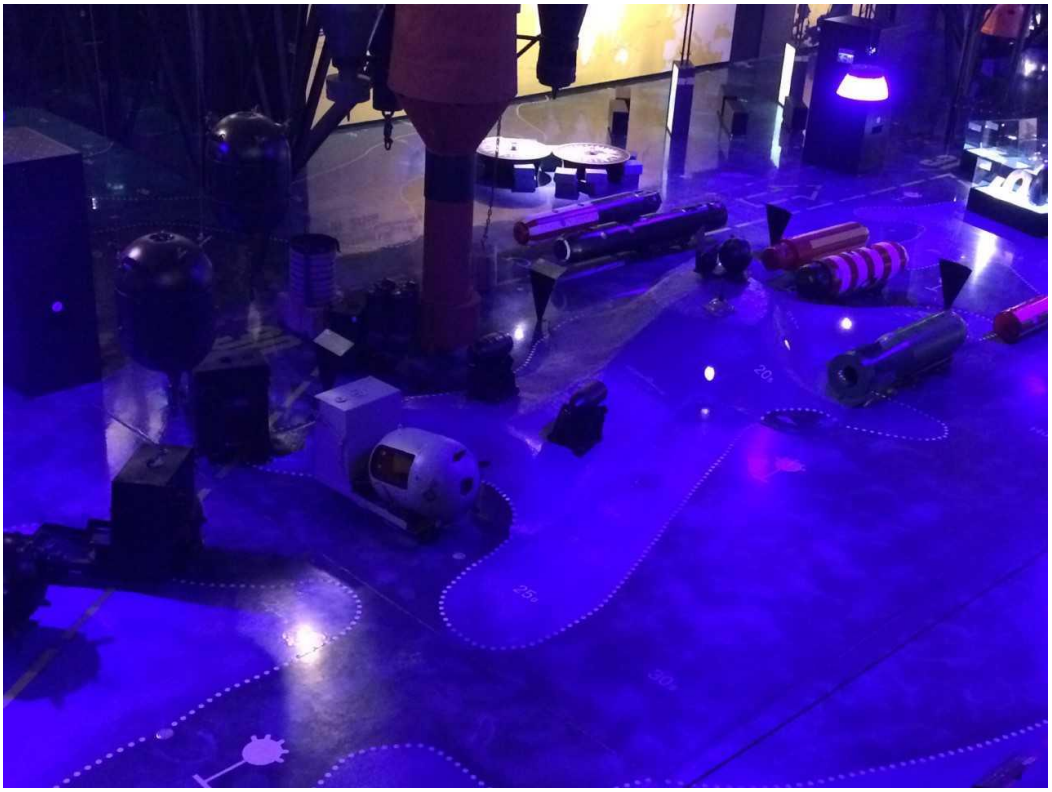

Figure 16. *The use of blue colour and the contour lines on the floor simulates a feeling of being underwater, Tallinn*. Photo: Estonian Maritime Museum. Used by permission.

entertaining experience, having plenty of room and using money and planning to achieve this end; in Pansio, all these resources, space, budget and planning, have been limited. There is also a difference in the basic idea of the two exhibitions; in Pansio, the tunnel forms a ”time travel” from the oldest mines to the later ones, as in Tallinn, the exhibition space imitates the sea floor, focusing more on the openness of the exhibition space. In Pansio, thus, the mines are just passive objects of the past on exhibition; in Tallinn, however, the mines, either lying on the imaginary seafloor, or floating in the imaginary water, express a more dynamic impression. In Tallinn, the sense of an imaginary underwater place is sought by the museum pretending not to be a museum.

Whereas in Tallinn the mines form only one part of the exhibition, in Pansio the concentration on mines alone can make the exhibition feel quite monotonous to a visitor, as there are lots of mines – and just that. Both mine assemblages consist mainly of sea mines, objects sharing the general attributes of shape, being round or cylindrical, and usually topped with Hertz horns. The sea mine is the central denotation of the exhibitions. The instant connotations associated to the objects are their maritime environment, connection to warfare, and memory and continuity in the community, as the objects are part of the collective recent history. Reversely, the objects might evoke a realization of peace in the viewer’s reality, as the objects of warfare are associated with a bygone time – or they might remind the visitor of the current security situation in the Baltic region as the objects are related to the history of a conflict involving Russia – as the enemy in Finland and as the occupying regime in Estonia.

The objects chosen to the exhibitions show different factors of valuations behind the choices. Objects in good condition are chosen, both to inform of the original appearance of the objects (i.e. before detonation), as well as possibly for aesthetic reasons. In Pansio, the sides of the mine casings are cut open so that the visitor might see the ignition systems inside the mines, reinforcing the informative aspect but reducing the aesthetic one. Typological variation is the primary factor behind valuation in both exhibitions, to introduce the range of sea mine typology, but also to reduce the experience of monotony of the mine assemblage.

In Pansio, demining is represented in a separate room. The central visual stimulus in the room is a demining scene played by two dummies in a rowboat, manually neutralizing a contact mine, imitating a real-life scene of the last minesweeper casualties in 1947. The scene provides a climax in the otherwise mine-laden tunnel, a touch at the reality of post-war demining, reinforcing the sense of historical connection of the objects on exhibition, by a scene imitating actual physical interaction between humans and the mines.

The representation of demining in a separate room in Pansio can be attributed to the different kinds of memories relating to sea mines in both sides of the Gulf of Finland; in Finland, minesweepers became a visible part of the narrative of the history of sea mines in 1990s, whereas in Estonia the use of sea mines as a weapon used in the struggle between the two occupation regimes, the Germans and the Soviets, remains the central memory relating to the objects.

The exhibition of certain objects gives the exhibition in Pansio a more patriotic and Christian tone, in contrast to the more neutral tone of Tallinn. There are photographs including Mannerheim,[83] and of persons held in high esteem for their contributions in mine warfare,[84] set to honour them. A glass artwork, *The Cross, the Sea, and the Mine* (Fin. *Risti, meri ja miina*), in a room in the end of the exhibition tunnel is meant to commemorate bygone mine troop generations with a strong Christian emphasis. In the artwork, the death symbolism of the mine is connected with the spiritual symbolism of salvation, represented by the cross; the sea, the setting of mine warfare and deadly demining, lies as a neutral entity in between.

The Pansio museum can, thus, be seen not only as an exhibition of past objects, but also as a commemorative site.[85] This aspect might be explained by the museum's background and connections to the military,[86] with the commemorative culture of the military as one of the shareholder needs behind the unfolding of the heritage process of the collection in the 1990s. Pansio is, unlike Tallinn, a "national museum" with its patriotic emphasis and the use of Finnish solely as a language of instruction.

[83] Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim (1867-1951) was a Finnish statesman and military commander. The cultural memory of Mannerheim has always been deeply divided in Finland; as he was a military commander of the White side of the Finnish Civil War in 1918, he has been remembered as a hero in the official nationalist narrative since the country's independence. His role as a military commander during WWII has reinforced this perception, creating a nationalist person cult. For his role in the civil war, he has earned a perpetrator role in the working class left-wing counternarrative, and the controversy of his memory has continued to this day, as evidenced by the still alive reverence to Mannerheim as well as objections and vandalism towards Mannerheim monuments. Mannerheim's inclusion in the visuality of the Pansio exhibition, thus, reinforces the nationalist connections of the exhibition, disregarding the "difficult heritage" of Mannerheim in Finland.

[84] Eino Huttunen, "the father of mine warfare" (Auvinen 2005:488); Olavi Arho, commander of the Mine Fleet, remembered for his contributions in mine warfare and demining; and Osmo Kivilinna, the commander of minelayer *Riilahti.* As Whitmarsh notes, the commemoration of individuals in war museums is usually projected to high rank military personnel; Whitmarsh calls these exhibitions "shrines to the elite of the nation or military unit" (Whitmarsh 2001).

[85] The role of museums as commemorative places has been covered by some researchers; Whitmarsh (Whitmarsh 2001) notes the connection of the commemorative role of museums with war museums in particular.

[86] As Whitmarsh (Whitmarsh 2001) notes, "a museum's history directly influences its approach to commemoration". This is true for the observation of the commemorative nature of the Pansio museum, with its roots in non-profit conservation of a collection used by the military for many decades, compared to the 21st century cash-making educational entertainment of Tallinn.

The lack of patriotic emphasis in Tallinn is probably due to the nature of the war in Estonia as a war between two occupying forces. In Finland, the memories of WWII in general are wrapped in the sense of the war having been an existential struggle. Remembering deceased soldiers in independent Finland has always been closely associated with the church institution,[87] explaining the religious artwork in Pansio. The exhibition in Pansio can, thus, be interpreted as conservative, in its patriotic and Christian emphasis.

The two exhibitions differ markedly in the multimodal use of visual means of communication: in Pansio, the exhibition uses lots of photographs, pictures, maps and technical figures to supplement the mines; in Tallinn, the use of photographs is limited only to one interactive information plaque, and the other visual means described above used in Pansio are totally lacking. The use of old black-and-white photographs in Pansio has an effect of reinforcing the sense of connection between the objects on exhibition and their historical context.

Both exhibitions have a markedly top-down approach to the history of the mines, reinforced in Pansio by the attention paid to biographies of prestigious persons in the higher echelons of mine warfare. The observation of Whitmarsh of the technological focus of war museums[88] is equally true for both of the exhibitions discussed in this study. In this respect, the Tallinn museum is especially devoid of the human experience of war. Real-life experiences of mine war and its consequences[89] are touched upon briefly only on the Pansio dummy scene. Neither of the museums shows a real effort in moving beyond traditional, technology-focused (in both cases), or patriotic (in Pansio), war exhibitions. Neither is a ”hot exhibition” that seeks to emotionalise the subject,[90] and neither explores the effects of mine warfare on bodies and minds. The exhibitions can be thought, however, to communicate the visitor an alternative, less known aspect, of the many aspects of WWII, that of naval mine warfare. The exhibitions do, however, represent different ends in the emotionality-didacticity dichotomy, with Pansio more emotional, and Tallinn more didactic.

[87] In Finland, deceased soldiers have been buried in ”heroes’ cemeteries” (*sankarihautausmaa*), special cemeteries under the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, since the Finnish Civil War, when the Whites began the tradition (Huttunen 2013).
[88] ”Focussing on technological performance inevitably neglects many other – often negative – meanings, and divorces objects from their original usage and from the people associated with them.” Whitmarsh’s observation of the Imperial War Museum is true also of the exhibitions discussed here, in that the museum ”emphasises technology rather than the context in which the objects were used, the people who made and used them, and the effects they had on their intended targets. The artefacts’ captions concentrate on their technical details.” (Whitmarsh 2001).
[89] Whitmarsh (Whitmarsh 2001) describes the representations of war in war museums as ”a sanitised version of warfare”.
[90] Whitmarsh 2001.

4.3 Textuality

Both exhibitions use textual information as a general means of communicating information. The quality and amount of information in the two exhibitions varies; in Tallinn, information about the mines is presented by several information boards along the mine exhibition, the mines are numbered and the information consists of short texts of each numbered object, and there is also one digital information board for basic information; in contrast, Pansio uses numerous laminated paper sheets, many of them in visibly degenerated condition, to present textual information. In Pansio, each object has an individual information sheet. The exhibition in Tallinn uses a moderate amount of textual information, whereas in Pansio the excessive amount of textuality in numerous sheets, coupled with the nature of the exhibition experience as a guide-dictated, not an individual, experience makes the visitors probably skip reading most of them. In Pansio, the textuality is complemented by the narration of the guide, Eero Auvinen.

The textual information in the two exhibitions has uniformities but also differences in their content. As the visuality of the exhibitions, also the textuality has a rather top-down approach. General information of the operation and use of sea mines, and of different modes of operation, are presented in both exhibitions, but in a more introductory manner in Tallinn. The textual content of both exhibitions is very technical, but in Pansio there is more focus on the actual historical connections of the mines, with information on mine manufacture, storing, minelaying and demining, giving the Pansio exhibition a kind of artefact life-cycle approach to the objects, whereas civilian mine reuse is mentioned in Tallinn as a curiosity. In this way, Pansio is more informative when it comes to the history of the mines, instead of focusing on their technological properties in the manner experienced in Tallinn. The differences of the messages mediated by the two exhibitions create two different interpretations of the history of the objects being exhibited, the sea mines.

5 JUMINDA MEMORIALS: CONTESTED PAST IN ESTONIA

The Battle of Juminda was one of the biggest naval battles in world history, counted in human losses (10,000-25,000 soldiers and civilians on the Soviet side) and vessels sunk (65 on the Soviet side).[91] The battle has, however, been mainly forgotten by global history. In Soviet Estonia, the battle was remembered by the construction of two memorials in the 1970s, which have been subject both to negligence and vandalism and later ceremonial use in the post-Soviet era. The following analysis attempts to understand the memory of the battle and how the ”difficult heritage” of Juminda has been memorialized in Estonia – how does a society choose to commemorate such a massive tragedy decades after its happening, and how collective memories change through time and among different interest groups claiming a relationship to the history of the battle.

The two memorial structures discussed in the text are both located close to each other in Cape Juminda, on the Estonian coast of the Gulf of Finland. Even as this perspective concerns memorials, like the earlier perspective discussing Finnish minesweeper memorials, it is constructed differently than the former; as there are just two memorial sites, located in the same place, there is no need for a comparative analysis as expressed in the former chapter. Rather, the text is constructed in a chronological order,[92] as the changes in the meanings of the memorials in Juminda are more closely related to temporality and the change of regimes in Estonia, than the more neutrally received memorials in Finland. This perspective attempts not to unearth the meanings of the memorial sites and the messages they mediate by examining their physical appearance and setting in detail, but by focusing more on their connection to the wider society and the political reality of post-Soviet Estonia, where, unlike in Finland, memories are divided between the country’s two largest ethnicities, the Estonians and Russians, with the memorial site receiving commemorative attention also from beyond the border, from Russians in the Russian Federation. Unlike in Finland, the attempt to memorialize a traumatic event and the conflict of memories relating to the battle of Juminda in Estonia can be

[91] The official Soviet estimate after the war was 10,000 people (Grooss 2017:151). Õun gives an interval of 12,400 – 25,000 people (Õun 2006:87). Grooss gives an estimate of 14,000 people (Grooss 2017:151). The documentary *Helvetti Suomenlahdella* (2006) gives an estimate of 16,000 people. Wihtol gives a low estimate of about 4000 men (Wihtol 1987:145); repeated by Auvinen (Auvinen 2005:495). About one third of the casualties were civilians. The estimates of sunken ships are far less conflicting in numbers. Õun gives an estimate of 64 vessels (Õun 2006:87). The information board on the site mentions 66 sunken ships. The losses of ships comprise 24 military vessels and 40 civil or auxiliary vessels (Õun 2006:87).

[92] Stephens also argues for the application of a cultural biography or ’life history’ approach to understand the meanings of memorials (Stephens 2007:244). Niven also notes the importance of studying the changes in the physical form, use and meaning of memorials (Niven 2007).

included under the definition of ”difficult heritage”, cultural heritage that is regarded with ambivalence and that produces conflicting memories.

The battle of Juminda is not well-known compared to, for example, other massive WWII naval battles. In Europe, the most well-known WWII naval battle is the Battle of Atlantic (1939-1945); however, as the battle took more than five years, it can't actually be considered a single battle in any sense, but a series of confrontations in the Atlantic region during the war. The evacuation of Dunkerque (1940) is the event that Juminda is often compared to; however, Dunkerque was not a naval battle, as the fighting took place on land, but the act of evacuation is the common denominator in the comparison. Most of the biggest and well-known naval battles took place in the Pacific: the attack on Pearl Harbor (1941; about 2500 dead[93]) is probably the most well-known WWII naval battle with massive losses, but far from the size of losses in Juminda.[94] Other massive well-known WWII naval battles are the Battle of the Philippine Sea (1944; about 3000 dead[95]) and Battle of the Leyte Gulf (1944; more than 10,000 dead[96]), both in the Philippine waters, the latter famed for being the biggest WWII naval battle and possibly the biggest in the history of naval warfare; this is rather interesting, compared to the estimates of the victims of Juminda.

There are, however, many reasons for this confusion in comparing the sizes of naval battles: one is the use of the term ”(naval) battle” to describe events ranging from a carrier battle (Battle of the Philippine Sea), a defensive struggle against a surprise attack on a naval base (Pearl Harbor), an evacuation hampered by mines, aircraft and artillery (Juminda), to warfare that took place in a large area during many years (Battle of Atlantic). Whether Juminda was a naval battle, thus, is dependent on the criteria used in defining a naval battle. Secondly, vessel types matter more than how many ships were sunk in counting the losses of a naval battle (for example, destroyers being smaller than cruisers), with tonnage lost, not lives lost, a possible measure to ranking the sizes of battles; damaged ships could also be counted as losses, as well as both killed *and* wounded people; making this more complicated, the estimates of the numbers of casualties vary (like, for example, the interval of thousands of people between the low and high estimates of the Juminda casualties quoted in this study), and are not entirely credible. The number of people and ships involved in a naval battle, in contrast to the number of casualties, is also one set of criteria used in ranking the sizes of naval battles.

[93] Õun 2006:87.
[94] The disparity is noted also by Õun (Õun 2006).
[95] Chambers 1999:549.
[96] See, for example, Clodfelter 2017:521-522.

What is clear, however, is that all of the above-mentioned naval battles exemplify different kinds of naval engagements; whether they can and should be compared, is debatable. The usefulness of attempts to rank naval battles in order to find the biggest one(s) is doubtful, considering the differences between individual events labelled as naval battles. The above comparison is rather food for thought in realizing the size of the battle of Juminda, and in wondering why a battle of such volume has been forgotten. In addition to the above examples of WWII naval battles, the Estonian scholar Õun compares Juminda to the Battle of Lepanto (1571; about 27 500 dead[97]) – one of the most famous and also one of the biggest naval battles in world history. The Battle of Svensksund (1790),[98] also in the Gulf of Finland, has been called the biggest naval battle in the Baltic; comparing the numbers, however, Juminda might actually have been the biggest naval battle in the Baltic. In Russian-language media, the battle has even earned a title ”*the bloodiest naval battle of the 20th century.*”[99]

5.1 Soviet commemoration

Juminda was not publicly remembered in the Soviet Union for a long time. The battle received public commemoration 30 years after the battle had taken place,[100] first in the form of a rather modest memorial, unveiled in 1972, an engraved rock lying amongst other rocks in the tip of Cape Juminda, on the seashore, close to the actual site of the battle – actually with a broad view to the waters where the ships had sunk (Fig. 17). The date on the stone, 28 VIII 1941, refers to the date of the battle. The location of the memorial site close to the waters where the tragedy took place makes the site a kind of a cenotaph, an empty tomb, for those who perished there.[101]

It almost seems like the first memorial would have been a wary attempt to break the silence of thirty years, materializing in the rather moderate appearance of the memorial. The later memorial, following the same reasoning, seems like to materialize a feeling that the first memorial was way too modest to commemorate such a huge tragedy, so that the second one would have to be way more monumental. This would also explain the relatively short span of time between the

[97] Õun 2006:87.
[98] The estimates of casualties are in the thousands, but the numbers cited for the Battle of Svensksund usually include the dead, the wounded and prisoners without clear differentiation (see Clodfelter 2017:95).
[99] ”*Самое кровопролитное морское сражение XX века*”; *Postimees* 13.10.2012. Translations from Russian are by the author’s.
[100] During the time, war memorial construction in the Soviet Union was booming (Inglis 1992:15).
[101] Stephens 2007:249. The site has been called a ”mass grave” (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 28.8.2018; *Sputnik* 25.8.2019) and a cenotaph (*Baltnews* 30.8.2015).

construction of the two memorials, as the memorial currently controlling the view in the tip of Cape Juminda was unveiled in 1978. The site was further modified in the following years.

The old memorial stone and the later memorial structure have a radically different appearance, as the later one has a far more exquisite appearance, complete with a surrounding paving and sea mines circling the structure (Fig. 18). The stone is shaped like a heart,[102] and is coloured red like a heart. The use of sea mines in the memorial entity reinforces the understanding of the role of the mines as the main weapon behind the massive casualties. The use of real mines connects the memorial to the actual history of the battle of Juminda, reinforcing the sense of reality of the past event, and making the cause of death of most of the casualties visible. The plurality of the mines on the memorial site reinforces the sense of the use of mines as a mass weapon. The selection of the ball-shaped contact mine topped with Hertz horns might be explained both by the object's eye-catching appearance, and by the fact that the mine type was extensively used in the Juminda minefields.

In other aspects, the memorial seems rather different from many conventional Soviet monuments. It lacks the grandiosity of the memorial structure, an accessible location, and the use of human figures represented in many Soviet memorials.[103] Military paraphernalia (the sea mines) in association with the memorial structure is the only element shared with conventional Soviet memorials.[104] The reasons for the moderate visuality of the Juminda memorials are probably connected to them being conceived of as local, not national, war memorials during their construction in the Soviet era; "large resources in all town [sic] and many villages were devoted to the making of monuments to the Great Patriotic War".[105] Palmer sees the memorials as the outcome of the official cult of the Great Patriotic War, as there were "thousands (if not tens of thousands) of monuments, large and small, erected to memorialize Red Army soldiers and battles".[106] Juminda memorials were ones among thousands constructed in the Soviet era.[107]

Why Juminda was for a long time forgotten in the Soviet Union might be explained by the official Soviet tendency to pay more attention to great victories, promoting the narrative of the battle of existence of the Soviet system against the Nazis, or to great sufferings, as the siege of Leningrad, that reinforced the collective identity of the Soviet citizens by the use of a collective

[102] "*Like a heart left on the shore*", stated Vello Myass, an underwater archaeologist (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016). Myass has worked with finding the ships sunken during the battle.
[103] Forest & Johnson 2007; Kattago 2009:156.
[104] Weapons and war materiel in Soviet memorials, however, are not usually authentic, but sculptures.
[105] Lane; cited in Inglis 1992:14.
[106] Palmer 2009.
[107] Inglis 1992:14-15.

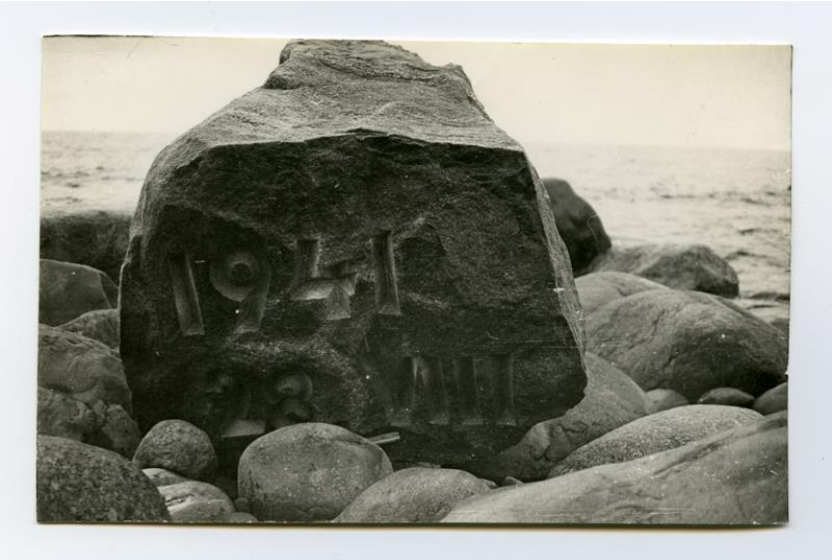

Figure 17. *The older memorial in Cape Juminda, Estonia. The carving on the stone refers to the date of the battle of Juminda*. Photo: Estonian Maritime Museum (MM F 782/82). Used by permission.

Figure 18. *The later memorial in Cape Juminda, Estonia. A red stone commemorates the tragedy that took place in the waters visible right behind it. One of the sea mines surrounding the memorial can be seen on the left*. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

trauma to unite them. Both great victories and great sufferings produced narratives that supported the Soviet ideology.

The battle of Juminda has many elements why it might have become just another Soviet narrative of heroism. The collective dedication of the men of the Soviet Baltic Fleet to push through the minefields, selflessly stopping to risk their own lives in saving people from sinking ships, resulting in most of the evacuees actually getting to their destination in the end, had the necessary constituents for a heroic narrative. Recollections of the survivors of the battle of people in sinking ships singing *Internationale* in the face of certain death[108] would also seem to reinforce a narrative of a collective socialist spirit. The following is equally striking:

> "*In the multivolume official "*History of the Great Patriotic War*" three lines are devoted to this event. Only three lines. Two sentences. And in this sea battle, in the cold Baltic waters, there was everything: courage and sacrifice of Soviet sailors, despair and horror of thousands of civilians, including women and children...*"[109]

The fact is, however, that such a narrative never emerged. For some reason, Juminda was chosen to be forgotten. Even when the event was eventually memorialized, it was seemingly conceived of as a local, not a national, war memory.

Shame is the only plausible explanation for the forgetting of Juminda. The retreat from Estonia to the eastern Gulf of Finland of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, where it was trapped for most of the war, was enough to shatter the willingness of the Soviet regime to concentrate in portraying the Fleet a superior force, like the Red Army was portrayed. Sea mines, the weapon that had sunk most of the ships in Juminda, and that had blocked the Soviet Baltic Fleet to the eastern end of the gulf, had also shattered the image of the Fleet. Tallinn had been the main base of the Fleet; losing it to the enemy and relocating the Fleet added to the shame of the event in the eyes of Soviet authorities.

The Soviet Baltic Fleet was commemorated for the Fleet's participation in the East Prussian campaign during the end of the war, by the construction of an exquisite memorial in Kaliningrad in 1978. The commemoration of the Fleet in the context of the end of the war, when the Germans were retreating, and located in a city captured from the Germans, can be seen as an attempt to portray the Fleet as victorious. Commemorating the victory of the Fleet in East Prussia, and forgetting the Fleet's evacuation that ended in a disaster in Juminda, was an attempt by the Soviet

[108] *Sputnik* 28.8.2018.
[109] *Postimees* 13.10.2012.

regime to erase shameful memories of failure and reinforce memories of the Fleet as a victorious force.

5.2 Post-Soviet commemoration

In the 1990s, the condition of the memorial site degenerated, and the site was subjected to vandalism. The ”physical and symbolic maintenance”[110] of the memorial site was disrupted. In the late 1990s, the Juminda village elder Karli Lambot contacted the then president of Estonia, Lennart Meri, urging for the restoration of the monument. The government gave its support to the restoration, and the monument was reopened in 2001.

The story of the shifting textualities of the memorial site is interesting, echoing the changes in the surrounding political reality; the original plaque on the memorial commemorated the heroic crossing from Tallinn to Kronstadt of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, in Estonian and Russian, expressing an official Soviet interpretation of the event. After being subjected to vandalism in independent Estonia, the plaque was changed to a new one in 2001, which states to commemorate the victims of WWII – in Estonian, Russian, German and Finnish.[111] An information board accompanying the memorial was also changed to a new one in 2001. In contrast to the new board with maps and photographs of ships, the one preceding the restoration had featured the figure of a Latin cross alongside the text, reinforcing a sense of the site as a local Protestant monument. The new board is informative in content, making clear the global dimensions of the battle. The information board includes two maps, one of the known locations of the ships sunk in the battle, and the other of the distribution of minefields near Juminda during the event. The maps reinforce the educational character of the textuality provided in the board, attempting to visualize the dimensions of the massive battle.

The use of the term *victims*, without specifying nationality, in the reinterpreted textuality of the memorial site, communicates a humanitarian message instead of a patriotic one. As Mayo puts it:

> ”*Humanitarianism is the highest social purpose in commemoration. Most war memorials are limited to honoring persons who died or served in war. Such praise, though important, is sometimes insufficient in proportion to the events that must be*

[110] Forest & Johnson 2002:3.
[111] The reopening ceremony of the site in 2001 was also attended by representatives from the embassies of Russia, Finland and Germany; *Postimees* 24.8.2011.

remembered. Expressing humanitarianism in war memorials is not only a statement of remembrance but also a questioning of war. Beyond honoring individuals who fought, some monuments offer a plea for peace".[112]

The focus on Estonian victims and vessels expressed in the information board provides a local perspective to the battle of occupying regimes in Estonia, giving voice to the Estonian memory of the battle in contrast to the Soviet memory expressed in the old plaque, and the focus on sunken civilian ships and civilian losses reinforces the message of the battle as a tragedy, not as a heroic military operation, as in the original plaque. The Estonian memory represented by the post-Soviet textuality of the memorial reinforces the message of Estonians being involuntarily associated in the battle, expressed in the information board by mentions of, among other victims, "*citizens of the Republic of Estonia who had been recruited to the Red Army*" and "*citizens of the Republic of Estonia who had been forcibly evacuated*".[113] Especially the use of the designation "citizens of the Republic of Estonia" reinforces the post-Soviet Estonian memory of the Soviet occupation as an illegitimate discontinuity between the interwar Estonian Republic (1920-1939) and its perceived legitimate successor (1991-present).

The ship figure on the current commemorative plaque is a sinking civilian steamship without visible military paraphernalia; as peaceful are the civilian vessel *Vironia* and the steamship *Eestirand*, both sunken in the battle, incorporated in photographic form on the information board. The inclusion of *Vironia* can be explained by it being the first vessel that was sunk during the battle,[114] giving it an important symbolic meaning marking the beginning of the tragedy that would ensue. *Eestirand* was hit by German aircraft and grounded on the island of Prangli, where the Estonian conscripts disarmed the ship's Russian soldiers; thus, the use of the ship in the information board reinforces the Estonian narrative of the unwilling Estonian participation in the Soviet Baltic Fleet. The information board draws attention to the civilian ships from the Baltic countries, mentioning that 22 of the sunken ships (about every third) were requisitioned from the Baltic countries by Soviet authorities. The ship figures associate the memorial with the tens of ships that sunk, taking the lives of the victims of the battle down with them. Soil from sunken ships is also buried in cylinders in the memorial area, and there are plaques on the ground along the access path to the memorial structure with the names of ships that sunk during the battle.

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[112] Mayo 1988:66-67.
[113] A similar focus on Estonian and Baltic ships, unwillingly recruited Estonians and forcefully evacuated civilians is expressed in Õun 2006, as well as in an official Estonian press release; Riikikogu (press release, National Defence Committee) 28.8.2016.
[114] *Vironia* sank due to hitting several sea mines.

The languages used in the information board in 2001 were originally Estonian, English, German and Finnish. Interestingly, Russian was left out from the information board but not from the plaque on the memorial, arguably expressing anti-Russian sentiments fed by the post-Soviet remembering of the Soviet era by ethnic Estonians. In 2009, however, an additional portion in Russian was added to the information board, completing, if rather involuntarily, the humanitarian message of the memorial's textuality by taking in consideration all parties of the past conflict. The Russian portion of the information board, however, remains visibly detached from the rest of the texts, as it is obvious that the portion has been added later, communicating that the post-Soviet contradictions have not yet been resolved.

The reinterpretation of the memorial site during the post-Soviet era reveals the connection of memorials to power. As regimes changed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and following the independence of Estonia, the meaning of the memorial also changed when the memorial was reopened in the post-Soviet era; the official Soviet interpretation was replaced with a popular Estonian interpretation. As Foote and Azaryahu note, "hegemonic forces in society manipulate historical memory to legitimize their authority".[115] In both interpretations, the story of Juminda was linked to a wider national narrative. The reinterpretation of the memory of the battle in 2001 is an example of what Foote and Azaryahu call an act of "replacing memory".[116] The case of Juminda is also connected to the wider phenomenon of reinterpreting the past in post-communist countries; "the fall of communism in Eastern Europe has allowed some memories of war to be publicly commemorated for the first time, or at least without being given a communist interpretation".[117] Regime change in post-Soviet states created a conflict of memories, and the official and public focus was fixed on memorials of the era, that needed to be either removed or given a new meaning.[118] As Niven points out, "the way memorials have changed over time… reveals the intimate link between the cultural and the political".[119] That memorials "fall in and out of public favour as opinions about the past shift and with the rise and fall of political regimes"[120] is evident in the case of Juminda.

The memorial site was subjected to vandalism in the post-Soviet years, as parts attached to the memorial structure (an anchor, copper tablets and pieces symbolizing ships' stems) were torn off, not to be replaced when the memorial was restored in 2001. Whether the occurrence of vandalism was due to the state of negligence during the 1990s, disrespect, or to a more ideologically inspired

[115] Foote & Azaryahu 2007:130.
[116] Foote & Azaryahu 2007:132.
[117] Whitmarsh 2001.
[118] Forest & Johnson 2002.
[119] Niven 2007:44.
[120] Dwyer & Alderman 2008.

reason is debatable. Vandalism of the memorial site, however, supports Foote and Azaryahu's notion that "replacement and vandalism figure prominently in periods of discontinuity in the political history of societies and regimes".[121]

The case of Juminda is related to the larger phenomenon of remembering Soviet history in post-Soviet Estonia, as after decades of silence, open criticism of the Soviet past, especially of the unwilling annexation of Estonia to the Soviet Union, has been expressed freely since the country's independence. Especially Soviet-era monuments promoting official Soviet ideology have been subject to vandalism and official removal in post-Soviet Estonia, like in the case of removed Lenin statues,[122] or the conflict surrounding the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn in 2007.[123] Like in the latter case, the contradictions of remembering have resulted also in ethnic tensions in Estonia, as Soviet monuments hold a positive meaning to many of the country's ethnic Russian community, being the second largest ethnicity in Estonia.[124] As Pääbo notes of what he calls the War of Memories in Estonia, "War of Memories occurs in a case of clashing collective memories when different nations have contradicting memories of the common past".[125]

The original plaque of the Juminda memorial was promoting official Soviet ideology, in its emphasis on heroism and the military, in contrast to both the new plaque and the information board, both of which see the battle as a tragedy to all sides and emphasise the role of civilians as victims of the battle. It could be said, though, that the Russian community has appropriated the new textuality of the site, as the term "victims of WWII" has been interwoven into the Russian narrative of fascist invasion and Soviet heroism, as expressed in the Russian-language media (note the use of the term Second World War instead of the Great Patriotic War):

> "*All of them, both military and civilian, left the German fascists, fought them to the end, all of them – victims and heroes of the Second World War.*"[126]

The attempt of the Russian community to incorporate the new textuality of the site to the Russian narrative is a strategy also seen elsewhere in the monument wars. In 1995, when the

[121] Foote & Azaryahu 2007:132.
[122] Smith 2008; Martinez 2018:45-47.
[123] Many studies have been written about these so-called "monument wars" in post-Soviet Estonia. See: Burch & Smith 2007; Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008; Pääbo 2008; Smith 2008; Ehala 2009; Kattago 2009; Melchior & Visser 2011. See also Martinez's work on the removal of Soviet material culture from Post-Soviet Estonian life (Martinez 2018), and Vihalemm & Masso's work on the identity formation of Estonian Russians in post-Soviet Estonia (Vihalemm & Masso 2007).
[124] Russians comprise about 25 % of Estonia's population; most have a family background of settling in Estonia during the Soviet era.
[125] Pääbo 2008:7.
[126] Baltija.eu 27.8.2016.

removal of the Bronze Soldier was already debated, the old Soviet-era plaque of the site commemorating the liberation of Tallinn was replaced (albeit temporarily) by a new plaque, commemorating ”the fallen of WWII”. As the city council of Tallinn was quite sympathetic to the Russian minority due to the city’s population being half Russian-speaking, giving a new meaning to the site was seen as a compromise solution.[127] After the monument was relocated in 2007, ”the meaning of the Bronze Soldier is open enough to commemorate both the Great Patriotic War and World War II”.[128] It could be argued that the Juminda memorial site has been spared from the ”monument wars” because it was reinterpreted in its current humanitarian fashion *before* the sparking of the ”monument wars” in 2004 following the Lihula SS memorial controversy,[129] removing the site from the category of Soviet memorials, and also because, like the current situation of the Bronze Soldier, the setting and location of the memorial are open to different, coexisting interpretations.

Post-Soviet ethnic tensions relating to the remembering of Soviet history in Estonia, as well as contradictions in the political relations between Estonia and the Russian Federation, are clearly seen in the ceremonial use of the site. Both interest groups, Estonians and Russians (both Russians in Estonia and Russians in Russia), have used the site in commemoration, including both Lutheran and Orthodox religious service on the site[130] (even as a significant percentage of both nationalities are irreligious,[131] the above-mentioned religious services rather reinforcing an ethnic division). Contrasted to the memorial conflict in Estonia described above, it seems that the memorial in Juminda is equally important to both Estonians – in local as well as national level – and Russians, with both Estonian and Russian flags flung in ceremonies on the site. In a country where memorials of the Soviet past have been removed in the post-Soviet era, the shared heritage of the Juminda memorial is an important exception with its mutual importance to both communities. As Smith notes, however, Soviet war memorials have been less ideologically unwelcome in post-Soviet Estonia than memorials to the communist ideology:

[127] Burch & Smith 2007; Smith 2008; Kattago 2009.
[128] Kattago 2009:158.
[129] Burch & Smith 2007; Smith 2008; Pääbo 2008.
[130] Õun 2006:82; *Sputnik* 25.8.2019. The religious dimension of the commemoration of the battle in the Russian community is also evidenced elsewhere; in 2019, a memorial plaque, commemorating the sailors who died in the two ships (*Аусма*, *Балхаш*), from Paldiski that sunk in Juminda, was consecrated in the Orthodox Church of St. Sergius of Radonezh in the predominantly Russian-speaking coastal town of Paldiski in Estonia. The case expresses both an ethnic Russian commemoration of the event in Estonia, as well as a local commemoration unlike the universal memorial site in Cape Juminda. The site chosen for commemoration was due to Paldiski’s location by the sea, and its connection to Russian and Soviet naval history. See *Sputnik* 3.9.2019.
[131] Most ethnic Estonians are irreligious, but the most widely practiced religion by Estonians in Lutheranism (11 %), while nearly half of Russians in Estonia are Orthodox (44 %).

> ”*The most prominent symbols of communist power such as statues of Lenin and other Soviet leaders were quickly removed in the aftermath of independence; however, more than a hundred Soviet-era monuments to the Great Patriotic War were left in place. These monuments had been erected as markers of Soviet power in Estonia, and yet at the same time they served as memorials to the fallen. By leaving them intact, the state implicitly continued to recognize this latter function.*”[132]

This connecting element has made the memorial site a place of negotiation of relations between Estonia and the Russian Federation, as well. After Estonia joined NATO in 2004, and the tensions between the West and Russia following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the site has been used in commemorative ceremonies by the Estonian government as well as Russian ambassadors and high-ranking officers as a place to remind of the past, Juminda serving as a reminder of the horrors of war in the modern world,[133] seeking connection between the memorial's both interest groups, Estonians and Russians. The words of Alexander Petrov, Russian ambassador to Estonia, on the anniversary commemoration ceremony on the site in 2018 crystallize the attempt to share a common memory between the two interest groups, while still reflecting a strongly Russian version of the events:

> ”*It is deeply symbolic that we are here today - both Estonians and Russians – together to honour the memory of those who died during the Tallinn crossing.*[134] *Remembering the sacrifices of the greatest tragedy in Europe's history, in the history of the world, I would like to remind you that on the path of those who claimed world domination, stood up those who cherished the ideals of peace, freedom and independence. We remember them today, feeling pride and pain at the same time.*”[135]

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[132] Smith 2008.

[133] Rear Admiral Ivan Merkulov, one of the initiators of the annual commemorative ceremony, states that: ” *We would like the state of peace and tranquillity to be eternal. This region, this land does not need war*” (*Sputnik* 28.8.2018). Merkulov has also stated, in connection to Juminda, that ”*a new war begins when they forget the old*”, using Juminda as a reminder of the horrors of war in mediating a humanitarian message (*Postimees* 24.8.2011). Merkulov has also noted the memorial's importance in uniting different nationalities (*Sputnik* 25.8.2019). Elsewhere in the Russian-language media, the narrative of victimization and heroism takes aboard humanitarian notions; ”*And the main idea that arises here immediately: let this never happen again. You can't play with fire, no war can be allowed, big or small, it will again take away a considerable number of human lives*” (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016). Also, Alvar Riisalu, vice mayor of Tallinn, in his speech on the site reminds of the horrors of war that should not be repeated, referring to the popularization of radicalism in the modern day (*Sputnik* 28.8.2018).

[134] The Russian term for the battle of Juminda (Таллиннский переход).

[135] *Sputnik* 28.8.2018.

Petrov describes the event as a tragedy, but emphasises the Russian narrative of the victimized Soviet people fighting off a fascist invader.[136] To Petrov, the commemoration of Juminda is connected to ”the importance of preserving the memory, of the cost of the victory in the Great Patriotic War.”[137] The messages mediated on the site by the higher echelons of the interest groups are not, however, simply conciliatory in tone. Marko Mikhelson, Chairman of the National Defence Committee of the Riikikogu (Parliament of Estonia), stated on the anniversary of the battle in 2016 on the memorial site that:

> “*We must do everything we can so that such a tragedy would never again be repeated and that our people would never again have to face only very bad choices. In order to have our people protected, so that they would never again have to experience the horrors of war, Estonia has joined NATO and contributes to collective defence.*”[138]

Mikhelson’s speech repeats the post-Soviet plaque’s humanitarian message of the site as a place of reminding of the horrors of war in order to prevent repeating them;[139] promoting the NATO membership of Estonia, however, by the Estonian government on the site touches down on one of the key contradictions affecting the relations between Estonia and Russia today, legitimizing the country’s NATO membership with a reference to a past war. To the Russian interest group using the site, Mikhelson’s speech arguably serves to rather divide than connect the interest groups.

Forest and Johnson argue that existing monuments can face three possible fates during regime changes, i.e. they may fall into the categories of Co-opted/Glorified, Disavowed, or Contested.[140] The Juminda memorial site was Disavowed during the 1990s, as the neglect of the site resulted in its deteriorating condition; today it’s a Co-opted/Glorified site, as its meaning has been growing since its reopening and active ritual use since 2001. It also remains Contested, as different narratives related to the commemorated event are being honoured on the site by different interest groups. The memorial site is also an ”arena”[141] for negotiating history and, thus, identity.

The importance of the battle to Russians is indicated in the increased attention paid to commemorating Juminda not only in Estonia, but also in the Russian Federation. Memorial structures

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[136] The intermingling of the Russian narrative with a reconciliatory tone regarding the memorial site is evident also in the Russian-language media; the site is described as ”*our common monument*” (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016). The Russian embassy in Estonia has also taken an active role in the commemoration of Juminda (*Sputnik* 19.8.2016).
[137] *Sputnik* 19.8.2016.
[138] Riikikogu (press release, National Defence Committee) 28.8.2016.
[139] ”Humanitarianism introduces the plea that society should neither forget such inhumanity nor allow it to be repeated” (Mayo 1988:67).
[140] Forest & Johnson 2002.
[141] Dwyer & Alderman 2008.

commemorating the event have been proposed to St. Petersburg and the island of Hogland. It seems that as commemoration and recognition of Juminda has increased in post-Soviet Estonia, it has also increased in post-Soviet Russia. The dedication of Russians to promote the memory of the battle also in the Russian Federation seems like a mission of dedicated advocates to bring into wider consciousness a ”forgotten battle” of WWII.

The site’s importance to Russian veterans is noted in the Russian-language media as a place of personal and shared mourning,[142] and a place of commemoration to the descendants of the victims of the battle,[143] but it must be noted that the memorial site is and always was, from the beginning of the project, important to the local community. Even as the local Estonian villagers didn’t take part in the battle, they saw and heard it at close distance off their shores. The battle fought in waters opening near their village was immense in scale, and was preserved in the local memory for decades.[144] The Juminda Village Society and the village elder Karli Lambot, who once initiated the memorial project, have been active in the commemoration of the event and on the use of the site to this day.[145] The Juminda memorials can therefore be regarded as both community and official/national memorials, with the community meaning of local villagers overwritten by the official Soviet meaning during the Soviet era. The Juminda memorial site functions as a community memorial for two different memory communities, exemplified by sections of the communities like Estonian villagers or Russian veterans.[146] It could be argued that Juminda has become a more widely accepted and acknowledged part of both the Estonian and Russian narratives of the war during the post-Soviet era, when both communities have been paying increased attention to the remembering of the battle.[147]

[142] Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 19.8.2016.
[143] *Sputnik* 27.8.2016.
[144] Local memory is emphasized in the Russian-language media (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 28.8.2018) as well as in an official Estonian press release (Riikikogu (press release, National Defence Committee) 28.8.2016). The phrase of a local villager describing what she saw from the shore, ”*sea was burning, children were screaming*”, is repeated in numerous articles in the Russian-language media.
[145] Karli Lambot has purportedly said that the memorial has ”universal value” (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016). See also: *Sputnik* 28.8.2018; Riikikogu (press release, National Defence Committee) 28.8.2016.
[146] This is reflected also on the personification of the memorialization of the battle in the persons of Karli Lambot, the village elder of Juminda, and Ivan Merkulov, a retired Rear Admiral, both active in the memorialization process of the battle.
[147] This is reflected by the publication of Õun’s work on the battle in Estonian (Õun 2006) as well as by the newspaper articles discussing the memory of the event in the Russian-language media referred to in this study. Oleg Besedin produced a documentary film of the battle, *Прорыв* (”Breakthrough”), in 2013. There is also an organization for the memory of the battle, Память Таллинского прорыва (”Memory of the Tallinn Breakthrough”) in Russia, based in St. Petersburg. The Estonian Maritime Museum is also planning an exhibition of the battle of Juminda in 2021, the 80th anniversary of the battle.

The sad, honouring atmosphere of the site[148] is probably explained by its proximity to where the battle took place.[149]

It is interesting how differently the history of mines is approached in public in both the museum and memorial contexts in Estonia, as the neutral tone of the Seaplane Harbour exhibition discussed in the previous chapter is contrasted to the Juminda memorials. The museum exhibition offers the local and international audiences a more exciting experience, focusing more on making the maritime past easily accessible and entertaining than attempting to reach the silent, sad atmosphere of the memorial site. Still, both are representations based on the same past. The above observation also tells us something about the differences of memorials and museums as commemorative places: the museum, embedded in the capitalist economy, is an institution with mixed obligations to economy and education; it conserves, displays and interprets the past, but it also has to make profit, and that is what the Seaplane Harbour does as one of the country's top attractions. Memorials, on the other hand, don't make money (on the contrary, they usually take a lot of money to be constructed). They are, keeping in mind the grey coloration and park setting typical to memorials, as well as their usual connection to commemorating death, more easily comparable to cemeteries and modern funerary culture than to museums.

The Juminda memorials commemorate the most tragic event of mine warfare in the Gulf of Finland during WWII, and the emphasis on remembering this event by Estonians and Russians, (for different reasons, though, as expressed earlier), and the Finnish emphasis on remembering other aspects of mine warfare (and in this way, actively forgetting the human tragedy in Juminda), expresses once more that the representations of history are diverse, subjective, and connected to different national narratives and different political agendas.

[148] "It is difficult to talk about it, it is difficult to read and listen, but it is necessary for today's people to know about it" (Baltija.eu 27.8.2016).
[149] Whitmarsh's notion of the effect of geographical distance to the emotional distance of the commemorated event is probably playing a part here, too (Whitmarsh 2001).

6 DISCUSSION

Tens of thousands of sea mines still lie in the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, testifying to an extensive mine warfare that took place in these waters more than 70 years ago. The mines occasionally rise back to the collective memory of the nations around the Gulf of Finland when they are found, accidentally or intentionally, and destroyed. The mines usually lie also in the bottom of collective memories of war – they appear only marginally in the otherwise popular representations and recollections of WWII in the region.

In the past decades, the memory of mine warfare in the Gulf of Finland has been revitalized in the public awareness by exhibitions in museums and an increasing number of memorials on both sides of the Gulf of Finland. It seems like the extensive public interest in WWII has made it possible to expand the field of knowledge related to the war – today, one can find easily accessible information not only about the events in the frontline (be they top-down military history or personal recollections), but also about, for example, POWs or the home front, i.e. previously disenfranchised memories of the war.

It is this context of previously marginalized experiences of war where the memory of mine warfare and demining also connects. There were multiple cultural reasons why sea mines deserved a marginal role in the narratives of the war. First of all, mine as a weapon was probably seen as a hideous and non-heroic means of warfare, replacing quality with quantity. Mines were a weapon detached from the human user; their use didn't require facing the enemy in a situation that was life-threatening to both sides, and once left beneath the waves, the situations where the mines actually exploded under an enemy vessel were not witnessed by the minelaying side, thus forming no memory of conflict to that party. Sinking enemy vessels by mines was not probably conceived of as heroic in the way sea battles between ships would have been conceived. As an unseen weapon with a considerable destructive effect, mines were a risk also to the side that laid them; once laid, mines were equally dangerous to everyone, free of human will. This hostility made them a feared weapon even as they were ”own” mines. This becomes clear from the incidents where a ship was sunk by hitting an ”own” mine.

Narratives of the mine war differ markedly in the different countries of the region. These different memories are also the basic explanation for the differences in representations of the past in later decades, as shown in the examination of memorials and museums in Finland and Estonia in this study.

In Finland, the use of mines is connected to the joint warfare with Germans, as minefields were mainly laid during the Continuation War jointly by Finns and Germans; the memory of fighting alongside Nazi Germany for three years itself is a controversial memory in the country.[150] Due to the extensive mine use by Finns with Germans during the Continuation War, the memory of mine warfare has been almost exclusively intertwined with the memory of this war. This might also help to understand the ways in which mine warfare has been remembered – or forgotten – in Finland. Remembering of the Continuation War in Finland has been controversial, as there have been attempts to interpret the alliance with Nazi Germany in attacking the Soviet Union as a separate war for Finland.[151]

Finnish memory culture of WWII has also tended to be heavily oriented towards land warfare, with war at sea generally receiving marginal attention. Probably the most well-known event of Finnish maritime warfare during WWII is the sinking of the flagship *Ilmarinen*. The sinking of *Ilmarinen* due to hitting a mine, which was felt as an extensive loss in the country,[152] understandably when considering the small size of the Finnish Navy at the time, is also arguably the most well-known event of mine war in Finnish cultural memory. The sinking of a flagship due to a mine was consequently a tragedy – if it would have been sunk in a battle, the narrative would probably have been told with an emphasis on patriotic martyrdom. The ship's sinking was, after all, at first kept secret from the public, a possible expression of shame on the manner of its downfall. The shock of the ship's loss in a non-combat situation probably also affected Finnish conceptions of the weapon itself – the sea mines. The possibility that the mine that sunk *Ilmarinen* was from minefields laid by Finns demonstrated the weapon's destructive hostility and silenced a narrativization of the event that would have demonized the opponent by putting the blame of the disaster on the Soviet side.

Au Finland, remembering the effects of mines on the past enemy is, interestingly, rare. The huge numbers of people killed and ships sunk in Juminda have been rarely remembered.[153]

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[150] History teachers identify Continuation War and the Nazi cooperation as the second most controversial theme, right after the Finnish Civil War, in the education of Finnish history (Hakokõngäs et al. 2019:44). See also Seitsonen et al.'s work on the "difficult heritage" of the Nazi cooperation in Finland (Seitsonen et al. 2018), and Savolainen's work on the controversy of the deportations of Finnish Jews during the Continuation War (Savolainen 2011), which clearly demonstrates how "difficult heritage" the war still is in Finland.

[151] This narrative of a separate war has earned the term *Finnish exceptionalism* (Kivimäki & Kinnunen 2011). See also Kainulainen 2014 for current discussion on conceptions of Continuation War as a separate war among Finnish historians.

[152] The sinking of *Ilmarinen* was represented as a tragedy already in the post-war era (Heinämies 1945). Interest in the ship has continued to this day, from more recent historiography (Penttilä 1986) to media coverage on the discovery of the ship's wreck (Yle 28.4.2016; *Helsingin Sanomat* 28.4.2016).

[153] Mentions of the battle of Juminda – especially about the numbers of human lives lost, or the civilian victims – in Finnish literature about the Continuation War and maritime warfare during WWII remain slight, even today. See, for example, Talvitie & Keskinen 2015 – in this volume focusing specifically on Finnish maritime warfare, Juminda is omitted altogether. Wihtol concentrates on the strategic aspects of the battle and gives a low estimate of 4000 men

Juminda, it seems, has been an uneasy memory in Finland as well. The only plausible explanation for this is that there is historical guilt in Finland,[154] about using such a hideous weapon as mines in sinking so many ships and taking so many lives – instead of sinking ships in sea battles between ships –, and about the number of civilian losses that resulted from the battle.

There is, however, one commonality in remembering mine warfare in Finland that makes the omitting of Juminda even more controversial. Olavi Arho, Knight of the Mannerheim Cross, commander of a minelayer fleet, was offered a knighthood for his achievements in mine warfare in 1943. Even as the nomination happened two years after Juminda, the role Arho played in laying mines in the Juminda minefields was important in his promotion to knighthood. As the original nomination document states, ”a great merit befalls him also for those big losses the enemy suffered while evacuating Hanko and Tallinn”.[155] Museums (including Pansio) and publications[156] in Finland have continued to reinforce the memory of Arho, even as his importance in patriotic remembering is clearly connected to his role as a perpetrator of suffering in Juminda. Arho represents an attempt of personification of the Finnish experience of mine war, marking a departure from the overall tendency to downplay mine warfare in the field of official military commemoration.

In Finland, post-war demining has been resurrected as a vital part of the narrative of the mine war and its consequences during the past few decades. In Finland, a veteran cult related to the mine war is most notably visible in the commemoration of minesweepers. Post-war demining can be seen as a forgotten narrative, where the contributions of the minesweepers in making the Gulf of Finland safe and enabling maritime commerce, vital in post-war rebuilding, were forgotten for a long time. It can be said, thus, that demining was marginalized in the narratives of the war and post-war rebuilding, even as the positive outcomes of demining on the society were extensive. The minesweepers were, in a way, one of the forgotten groups of people of the war who gained recognition only decades after the war. Memorial construction for minesweepers exemplifies what Kidd and

drowned – omitting all civilian losses (Wihtol 1987:137-145). Auvinen calls the event “the world’s greatest mine catastrophe” (Auvinen 2005:495) – a phrase he also uses in the guided tours in Pansio – but his low estimate of 4000 people, without a mention of civilian losses, rather reinforces the silence about the event and its dimensions in Finnish historiography. Finnish journalism has, however, being reviving the memory of the battle as a tragedy in the past decade, with a more reconciliatory tone; see *Helsingin Sanomat* 5.9.2010; *Seura* 9.2.2015. In the latter article, however, the mention of ”Estonian quislings” taking part in the convoy seems rather accusative, legitimizing the Finnish mine use. See also the Finnish documentary *Helvetti Suomenlahdella* (2006).

[154] The Finnish guilt has been noted also by the Estonian Juminda scholar Mati Õun, who attributes it to the Finns’ perpetrator role behind the gruesome outcome of the battle (*Seura* 9.2.2015). In Finland, soon after the battle, lots of bodies of those who had died during the battle were washed ashore on the Finnish side of the Gulf of Finland; the story behind these bodies was kept secret (*Postimees* 13.10.2012; *Postimees* 24.8.2011*)*.

[155] My translation. The original nomination document can be read in the Knights of the Mannerheim Cross website: http://www.mannerheim-ristinritarit.fi/ritarit?xmid=8

[156] See, for example, Talvitie & Keskinen 2015.

Murdoch call ”inclusiveness”; ”memorials need to cater also for the sectional memory of groups previously excluded from collective acts of remembrance, occluded or marginalised by official ambivalence or indifference”.[157] The emphasis on demining, however, masks the Finnish guilt of extensive mine use as the allies of Germans, that resulted in huge losses of human lives and ships in the Gulf of Finland. Interestingly, as mine troops both laid and destroyed mines, the same dualism is projected towards sea mines in the Finnish conception of the mines. In addition to emphasising the role of demining in enabling maritime commerce, mines are also remembered as a weapon of defence that made maritime commerce possible during the war years.[158] Finnish collective memory thus emphasises the defensive, not offensive, role of sea mines.

An interesting feature of remembering the past of the mines in Finland is the concentration of commemoration in Turku, as three memorials and the Pansio museum are located there. The clustering of memorials and museums in Turku represents the highest volume of mine-related commemoration in the whole region of the Gulf of Finland. As a major city located by the Archipelago Sea, Turku had its role in mine manufacture and storage, as well as in demining vessel production, in addition to functioning as a naval base during post-war demining, and has been home to an active branch of the minesweeper veteran movement. Two of the memorials and the museum, however, are located more specifically in the Pansio district of Turku. Pansio has been one of the main bases of the Finnish Navy since 1939, which probably explains, along with the observations discussed above, the concentration of commemoration related to maritime warfare there. Turku, as a home both to a minesweeper veteran community and a naval base, and with a notable role in the history of mine war and demining, seems the most convenient place for a clustering of mine-related commemoration, with the memorials and museums serving both as a symbolic manifestation of the city’s naval history expressed in urban space, and as places of commemoration and ritual remembering close to interest groups with a demand for such sites.

In the Soviet Union, mine warfare was not seen as a very complimentary memory either, considering the less successful mine use of the Soviet Union compared to its enemies in the region, and the evacuation of the Soviet Baltic Fleet through a series of minefields that was felt as a shameful catastrophe in the official spheres. Only in the 1970s official commemoration of Juminda, the most tragic experience of mine use in WWII for the Russians, was realized, even as with a modesty contrasting to the grandiosity of the many other Soviet monuments of the era. For Russians today, especially Russians in Estonia, the memory of the tragedy of mine war is a cherished object of

[157] Kidd & Murdoch 2004:3.
[158] Auvinen notes that mine war made maritime traffic possible during the war era (Auvinen 2005:505).

commemoration. Russian commemoration, however, still retains an emphasis on heroism and sacrifice,[159] as in the Soviet era, connected to the larger phenomenon of remembering the Great Patriotic War in today's Russia and a notable veteran cult related to it.[160]

The role of sea mines in the Russian narrative is that of a hideous weapon used by the enemies of the Soviet Union in their aggression in the region; mine warfare is integrated into the wider narrative of the evil fascist regime attacking the Soviet Union in a war of extermination. Civilian victims are emphasized in the Russian narrative of Juminda arguably for creating a sense of victimization, providing for the demonization of the enemy, primarily the Germans. The concentration on accusing Germans is interesting, as most of the mines in the Juminda minefields were laid by Finns.[161] This is further evidence that the narratives of mine war are combined to larger national narratives, as Germans rather than Finns have the perpetrator role in the narrative of the Great Patriotic War. It also reveals us something of the nature of mines as a means of warfare; even as we now know that most of the casualties in Juminda were caused by mines, most of which were laid by Finns, the memory of the Russian veterans of the battle focuses on the visible enemy, especially on how German pilots fired at people on the water.[162] As Finns were absent during the battle,[163] the mines have also become associated with the Germans, who harassed the departing convoy with aircraft and coastal artillery. In Estonia, "the Russian-speaking community shares a common understanding about the Second World War with Russia, which defines it as the Great Patriotic War and depicts it as the Russians' self-denying fight against evil fascism".[164] The attention paid to commemorating the victims of mine war in the recently revived Russian memory of Juminda also communicates the fact that Russians bore the greatest casualties – percentual and absolute[165] – not only in WWII in general, but also in mine warfare in the Gulf of Finland.

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[159] Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 28.8.2018.

[160] As Smith has summarized, "the victory over Nazism in 1951-1945 has arguably become the main unifying factor within Russian national identity" (Smith 2008). Forest & Johnson also note that "from 1945 through the mid-1980s,World War II (which Russians call the Great Patriotic War) was perhaps the single most powerful element in the constitutive national narrative of the USSR" (Forest & Johnson 2002:2), although it could be said that the meaning has reached far beyond the 1980s.

[161] Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 28.8.2018.

[162] Baltija.eu 27.8.2016; *Sputnik* 28.8.2018.

[163] Finnish patrol boats actually engaged in offensive action during the battle (Õun 2006:87) but it could be said that Finns were engaged in the battle mainly by the use of mines, as Germans were engaged mainly by the use of aircraft and artillery.

[164] Pääbo 2008:11.

[165] Russian losses of human lives due to mine warfare are hard to estimate, but the following shall provide some measure in comparing the Russian losses to those of Germans and Finns. According to Auvinen, Russians lost an estimated 3100-6200 lives during the Continuation War due to sea mines. The estimate considers only military vessels, and as Auvinen provides a low estimate of 4000 lives lost in Juminda, the real total count must be considerably higher – passing 10,000 without a question. Auvinen estimates German losses due to mine war as 850-1900 lives, and Finnish losses as 326 lives, most lost aboard *Ilmarinen* (Auvinen 2005:506-507).

In Estonia, mine war is remembered in both the Estonian and the Russian communities through the tragedy of Juminda. As an occupied country that did not directly participate in mine use, but whose people and ships were drawn into the maritime conflict due to the Soviet occupation, the Estonian memory expresses a sense of victimization and an accusative tone towards the Russians, most notably expressed in the current textuality of the Juminda memorial site. In post-Soviet Estonia, Juminda, as a massive mine battle into which many Estonians were unwillingly drawn, is used in emphasising the memory of the unwillingness of Estonians in being a part of the Soviet Union. Blame for the Axis side (the ”perpetrators”) of the battle, Finns and Germans, is however silent. This, connected to other incidents of Nazi sympathies in Estonia, then and now, makes the clash with Russian commemoration of the Soviet past even more difficult. As Kõresaar summarises it:

> ”*A special meaning continues to be assigned to World War II in most European countries, in order to define one's own identity and the consensus of values related thereto… At the beginning of this millennium, the Baltic countries, including Estonia, have come to symbolize this conflict of memories related to World War II – be it historical disputes with Russia or the ¨battle of the monuments¨. Especially in the case of the latter, World War II is seen as a source of exclusion and a mechanism of divisiveness in both the bilateral and ethnic sense.*”[166]

Kõresaar also notes the differences that came about in remembering the Soviet past in post-Soviet Estonia, and the victimization evident in post-Soviet Estonian remembering of the war:

> ”*In the 1990s, a tendency appeared in remembrance and its reception to blend various repression experiences together into one narrative of suffering.*”[167]

Seemingly Juminda has also become a narrative of Estonian victimization in the post-Soviet era, thus becoming an extension of the *one narrative of suffering* promoted in Estonian remembering, as described by Kõresaar above.

In the narratives of mine war in general, commemoration is legitimized by victimization. The Russian memory of fighting a defensive war against Nazi invaders (and their Finnish allies), and the Estonian memory of being drawn into the mine war by the occupying Soviet regime, are examples of this phenomenon. The side of the conflict that could be most easily attributed with a perpetrator status (in contrast to victimization) in regard to mine warfare, the Finns, avoid focusing on offensive mine warfare practised by the country; instead, how mines were cleared by

[166] Kõresaar 2011.
[167] Kõresaar 2011.

Finns after the war gains much more attention. Finns have also managed to escape the perpetrator status because neither the Russian nor the Estonian narratives have emphasized the role of Finns in Juminda, being concerned more with the construction of a negative interpretation around the side of the conflict that has earned the primary perpetrator status in the respective national narratives.

What these different narratives of mine war and its commemoration reveal us, is that there is no single narrative of the mine war. What we remember of mine war in the Gulf of Finland is biased by different national narratives, affected by local experiences of the war and different ideologies. The remark is further reinforced by the case of the conflicting memories surrounding the Juminda memorial: in Juminda, two narratives, one Estonian and one Russian, with different memories of the mine war and the battle of Juminda, clash, contributing a conflict in the modern world. The memories related to sea mines, and the political reality surrounding them, are very different in the southern side of the Gulf of Finland than on its northern side. The dividedness and conflict of memories in Estonia are a part of the larger phenomenon of creating post-Soviet identities of modern Estonians and Russians, in relation to the collective remembering of WWII in both ethnic communities respectively. As Smith puts it:

> ”*In the case of contemporary Estonia, efforts to build an imagined national community embracing all residents of the restored sovereign state have been complicated by the existence within the population of two divergent – one could say diametrically opposed – national collective memories relating to the events of World War II and its aftermath.*”[168]

Conflicting narratives are different perspectives, deriving from different historical experiences of different communities, to a common history; ”opposing groups in a conflict will often entertain contradictory and selective historical collective memories of the same past.”[169] As Kattago notes of the Estonian-Russian memory conflict:

> ”*Both narratives are factually true; however as the conflict over the Bronze Soldier monument reveals, the politicization of memory tends to freeze historical events into myth thereby dismissing the complexity of the historical context*.”[170]

The memorials discussed in this study, the minesweeper memorials in Finland and the memorials in Cape Juminda, contrast notably with each other by their backgrounds and the reactions

[168] Smith 2008.
[169] Bar-Tal 2014.
[170] Kattago 2009:151.

they evoke, reinforcing the sense of different narratives discussed above. In Finland, demining is a safe subject of commemoration, with an understandable message, avoiding memories of shame related to mine use, and sitting well into the deeply entrenched, widely accepted memorial landscape and veteran cult of WWII in Finland. In Estonia, the subject of commemoration is related to tragedy, interpreted differently by the two major ethnicities of the country, uniting them by the importance of the site to both interest groups but also dividing them in their memories related to that shared past, in a country where the commemoration of WWII has allowed conflicting interpretations to clash for just 30 years. In Finland, the memorials stand passively where they are, whereas in Estonia, they are contested agents in the politics of memory. Whereas in Finland one of the main *raisons d'être* of the minesweeper memorials has been, together with the commemoration of the dead, to bring recognition to veterans still alive, the Juminda memorials' purpose, beyond commemoration, is to serve as a universal monument of peace, or even as a political arena. The use of the memorial sites also reveals something about their state of sacralization; in Finland, the sites face ignorance, used in commemoration only by a devoted community, whereas in Estonia, the Juminda memorial site is usually depicted as a place with a sad atmosphere and deference,[171] honoured by high-ranking guests from the Estonian and Russian political spheres, and frequented by international visitors, with the flags of Estonia, Russia, Finland, Germany and the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania sometimes used in ceremonies on the site. Commemoration of mine war in Finland is a community activity, whereas in Estonia, it gains national multi-ethnic and even international meaning. Memorials discussed in this study both in Finland and Estonia, however, are places of ritual commemoration, or "performance";[172] "through rituals people can focus on war memory, and their performances temporarily renew the importance of these memories in the landscape".[173] Unlike in Finland, however, in Estonia the ritual commemoration of mine war – the battle of Juminda – focuses on one day, 28 August, when all interest groups gather on the site. An event with a fixed date is arguably easier for people to perceive than a process that took many years, i.e. demining.

War memorials commemorate "death for something", and attempt to "make sense of the senseless".[174] In the memorials of mine war discussed in this study, the meanings of death in war take different forms in different communities; in Finland, demining activity is depicted as a common good serving the whole Finnish society in a peaceful project of social reconstruction; to Estonians, the battle of Juminda is a story of victimization under an occupying regime, with death a senseless

[171] See Mayo 1988:63 for thoughts on behaviour in a sacred place (a memorial site).
[172] Dwyer & Alderman 2008.
[173] Mayo 1988:71.
[174] Kattago 2009.

tragedy; and to Russians, death in the battle of Juminda was meaningful in a just war against fascism. The Juminda memorial site, in addition to its connection to these narratives, seems to hold a deeper, more universal meaning; the multiple calls for peace voiced at the site both by Estonians and Russians, and the shared use of the site by the two communities, makes the Juminda memorial site resemble Holocaust memorials in the way in which ”such memorials are warnings about the violence of recent history and the possibility for a return to such violence”.[175] This is a part of the paradoxicality of the site, as it can be used both for the commemoration of heroism as well as for universal calls for peace. The arguably post-Soviet conception of the memorial site as a monument of peace also communicates the insecurity felt by Estonians in a strained political atmosphere with its colossal neighbour.[176]

What is common to the memorials of mine war in both sides of the Gulf of Finland, however, is their lack of monumentality. Neither the minesweeper memorials in Finland, nor the memorials to the battle of Juminda in Estonia, share the symbology typical to war memorials in general; monumental architecture, sculptures of human figures and the nationalist ethos of war memorials just aren't there. The visuality of the memorials does not offer an easily perceivable interpretation of the past; this makes the textuality of the memorials important in deciphering the message of the monument. Probably because of this lack of visual meaning, the memorial site in Juminda can be incorporated easily in both the Estonian and Russian narratives – it only requires the textuality of the site to be altered to give it different meanings. So why is mine war a topic usually forgotten, and when commemorated, then in a rather moderate fashion? The reasons underlying the decisions of how to represent mine war probably reflect both the cultural considerations of mines as a weapon, the nature of their use contrasting to the nationalist ideals of heroism and martyrdom; the commemoration of previously publicly unacknowledged events of the war is probably also a factor influencing the lack of monumentality in the memorials. It might also be argued that along with these observations, the rather cautious commemoration of mine war also reflects the self-image of the communities behind their construction; both the minesweepers in Finland, as well as the Juminda village community who have been actively involved in the commemoration of the battle from the beginning, have probably sensed that their vision of the importance of the remembering of these events might not automatically receive an official and public welcome to the already existing narratives of the war.

[175] Kattago 2009:154.
[176] See, for example, Kuus 2002.

Both post-war demining in Finland and the battle of Juminda in Estonia were, and for a considerable degree still are, one of the lost stories of the Second World War. As memorials have the power to shape public memory, they can also eradicate ”historical amnesia”; as memorials to forgotten events of war are constructed, and as they become a part of the landscape of memory, the events themselves resurface in public memory. This also evidences the social potential of memorials in bringing social recognition to forgotten people or stories of the war. Memorial projects can work as a media by which recognition is sought and gained, like in the case of the minesweeper memorials in Finland, or memorial sites can be used as a reference in discussing the politics of today, in pleas for peace, claiming conflicting narratives on a site, or in legitimizing political action like joining NATO, as seen in the case of Juminda.

The observation of difference applies also for the exhibitions discussed in this study, as they differ markedly on both sides of the Gulf of Finland. The neutrality in depicting war in Estonia as a part of a tourist attraction is contrasted with the more nationalistically biased exhibition in Finland, where attempts to attract tourists are lacking, and where visiting the museum has been left to those with the dedication to arrange a guided tour specifically to see sea mines – arguably an indication of the degree of dedicated enthusiasm towards Finnish WWII military history in the country.

The organizations behind commemoration also differ markedly in Finland and Estonia. In Finland, commemoration has been mainly community-based, with memorial projects usually initiated by the Minesweeper Guild, and the Pansio mine museum also being a rather community-based project by and for maritime military enthusiasts. In contrast, in Estonia the state and the museum institution pay much more attention to commemorating the heritage of the mines, in housing a mine exhibition in the country’s most visited museum, and in paying official attention to the Juminda memorial site. In Estonia, the sites have national importance, expressed by the official investment and borders crossing influence of the monuments and museums there. It could also be argued that due to different historical experiences of mine war, Estonians have no restrictions in exhibiting mine war in its own space in one of the country’s top attractions, as the exhibition does not potentially open up debates on national guilt, as a mine exhibition of the same visibility and popularity in Finland might do.

What ensues from these different politics of memory are, of course, different currents of consciousness about the past. In Estonia, with official attention paid to the memorial site in Juminda, and with a mine exhibition as a part of the country’s most popular museum, the memory of the role of mines in the events of WWII in the region becomes part of the public consciousness. In

Finland, then, with the military enthusiast group forming the core audience of the representations of the past of the mines, the consciousness of the history of the mines stays buried from the general public, continuing to be a marginal experience of the war.

Regardless of the different narratives of mine war and the different sets of public consciousness they create in the different countries of the region, one aspect of the mine commemoration phenomenon links the remembering of mine warfare in the Gulf of Finland with the wider heritage of WWII sea mines in Western culture. Common to the phenomenon of commemorating and exhibiting the past of the mines through the media of memorials and museums in both countries discussed in the study is the focus on the ball-shaped, horned sea mine, whether used as real neutralized mines in connection with memorial structures, or exhibited in museums.[177] Other material culture related to sea mines, for example minelaying vessels and demining vessels, are usually exhibited in connection to other heritage ships,[178] not in the context of mine exhibitions. The contact mine with its Hertz horns has an eye-catching and recognizable appearance, even as mines with a different appearance – like magnetic mines with a long cylindrical shape – were also used. The contact mine, of course, was heavily used in the Gulf of Finland, but its extensive use is not enough to explain its habitual use in representations of mine warfare and demining. Of all the mine types used, the contact mine, of course, has the grimmest look; a metal ball with numerous horns looks definitely threatening, especially when it lurks unseen in the depths, hostile to anyone regardless of whether they are enemies, ”owns”, civilians – or, perhaps, members of later generations who encounter them as still potentially dangerous remains of the past; the mine is attributed an agency of its own in its universal hostility, continuing to threaten lives and bodies decades after the war where it was designed to work has been over. The contact mine has become a symbol of sea mine warfare in general, represented in Western culture in different media, from cartoons to video games.[179]

Representations of sea mines in Western culture usually pose them as a haunting presence from the past, still dangerous objects reminding of a violent past that reappear from or lurk in the depths of the sea. These representations are connected both to the wider phenomenon of the lure of underwater WWII remains, usually sunken ships, and the conceptions of the sea in human cultures as a mysterious and a dangerous another world. Perhaps the otherness and the liminality of the sea as a natural environment hostile to the human species is a part of the aura of the sea mines in

[177] A contact mine is also the symbol of the Minesweeper Guild.
[178] For example, the main exhibition of Forum Marinum in Turku exhibits the former demining vessels *M/S Wilhelm Carpelan* with other museum ships, with sea mines near the entrance to the boat, and an information board of demining equipment, emphasizing the boat's role as a former demining vessel.
[179] See the list of the use of sea mines in various forms of Western popular culture on the TV Tropes website: https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/SeaMine

Western culture as a threatening object connected to the dangerous and different watery world of the sea.[180]

The habitual use of the contact mine in representations of sea mines might also be explained by the appearance of the Hertz horns, which to so many people resemble spikes, so much as to sometimes actually turning into spikes in representations; metal objects with spikes, of course, are easily associated with the threat of physical damage. These associations make it possible to understand why the contact mine has become a symbol of sea mines in general, the shape of this variety of sea mines reinforcing a sense of a dangerous and violent object in peoples' minds. The aura of the contact mine, its ability to arouse fear, might also be a force behind the use of the object in memorials and museums – and maybe a reason for the use of specifically *real* mines that were once dangerous, evident also in the mine-anchor -variety of Finnish minesweeper memorials discussed in this study.

It could, however, be argued that the concentration on the objects of mine war distances the subject from human experience. The impact of mines as an explosive weapon on human bodies, or the fear of physical injury or death felt towards them, for example, among minesweepers, is nowhere to be seen in either memorials or museums discussed in this study. In addition to this physical and psychological derealisation of violence,[181] mine troops, minesweepers or the victims of mines are none represented in sculptures in memorial structures in an attempt to forge narratives of heroism or victimization. In the representations of mine war, the mine itself as an object occupies the central place, enforcing a primarily technological consciousness of the objects.[182]

[180] See, for example, Westerdahl 2011:751-754.
[181] Ypersele 2004.
[182] Whitmarsh 2001.

CONCLUSION

The heritage of WWII sea mines in the countries surrounding the Gulf of Finland consists of the material remains of the mines, in the bottom of the sea as well as in museum exhibitions and incorporated into memorial structures, and the cultural memories surrounding the objects in the form of competing, and sometimes controversial, narratives of the past of the mines. The perspectives of this study examined separate cases of cultural heritage of the mines, i.e. the minesweeper memorials in Finland, the comparison of two mine exhibitions in Finland and Estonia, and the memorialization of the ”difficult heritage” of the mine battle of Juminda in Estonia. As evidenced by these studies, the specific ways of commemoration and memorialization (i.e. museums, memorials) and the kinds of memories attached to the heritage of sea mines differed significantly in Finland and Estonia, and even between different forms of commemoration, related to the different national narratives inherited by the descendants of the different participant nations in the war, and to the use and conceptions of the different forms of commemoration.

As heritage, the sea mines are a particularly interesting case, as they embody dramatically dualistic meanings; they are both seen as a threat to the modern users of the sea, an obstacle to be cleared from the way of development (in the form of underwater gas pipes, for example), so that they are continuously sought by and destroyed by the navies of the region; at the same time, they are conserved and exhibited in museums and erected on top of memorial structures – memorials that commemorate both the victims of the mines as well as their potential for providing security. Above all, the mines surface from the depths of cultural memory from time to time in cultural representations of them often as spiked, explosive menaces from the past. All this is evidence of the dualistic cultural reflections to, and the interest in, the mines in a broader Western cultural perspective.

The study also leaves many possibilities for further study of the topic. As Pansio was closed during the making of this work, and as the mines will soon be unveiled in a new destination, it will be interesting to see how the new exhibition will contrast with the former, and how the mines will be represented in an exhibition planned more than 20 years after the planning of the previous one. It will also be interesting to see how Juminda will be represented in Tallinn in 2021, as the event will be exhibited in the country’s most visited museum. Both of these new exhibitions will also be worth of further scientific enquiry.

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